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["SWEETHEART," SAID ALAN, LOOKING INTO DINA'S EYES, "YOU ARE THE ONLY WOMAN I EVER LOVED!"]

## THAT HORRID MR. LOMAX.

### [A NOVELETTE.]

#### CHAPTER I.

It must be a remarkably brave man who ventures to marry a woman of better birth and ancestry than himself, unless, indeed, her family are so desperately poor, and he is so rich that the matter becomes a fair exchange. But James Barton was not rich when he wooed and won pretty graceful Mona Trafford, the only daughter of Lord Trafford of Dene; he was just a plain farmer who, in his own neighbourhood, did not visit with the "county," but occupied rather an anomalous position, his fellow farmers thinking him "faddy" and above his business, while the gentry did not class him among themselves.

He was young, and taking a rare holiday, when he met Mona Trafford, who was travelling with her aunt, Mrs. Grey, an impetuous

warm-hearted woman, with just a dash of Bohemianism about her.

She had no children of her own, she was devoted to Mona; and as her brother, Lord Trafford, possessed two sons to be provided for, she thought her pretty niece might please herself, so she aided and abetted the lovers; and when Lady Trafford wrote a peremptory letter commanding her daughter to return home at once, and refusing to hear of Mr. Barton's pretensions, Aunt Lucy betrayed the date of the journey to Jim, with the result that the day before her parents expected her Mona was missing, and, instead of their pretty daughter, they received a loving note imploring forgiveness, and signed "Mona Barton."

Forgiveness was never granted. Perhaps, left to himself, Lord Trafford might have been reasonable; but his wife and his eldest son kept him up to the mark of dignity and assured him it was unworthy of his name to pardon such an offence.

Gentle Aunt Lucy, who had helped to bring about the mischief, would have done her utmost for the delinquents, but only six

months after Mona's wedding she passed away.

Mr. and Mrs. Barton went home to the Uplands Farm, and began their married life. It must have been a terrible change for Mona; but she uttered no complaint. Maid, gaieties, balls, and luxuries were things of the past.

Jim kept on his old housekeeper that his wife should not have to soil her pretty fingers with domestic cares, and in his rare leisure he was always ready to drive Mona out in the old basket-carriage. He never went to market without bringing her home a new book or magazine, and, as she uttered no complaint and always greeted him with a smile, he persuaded himself that she was happy and contented with her lot.

And she was happy in so much that she would not have exchanged his love for all that the world could have offered her. She was contented in so far that she never hankered after the pleasures and grandeur she had renounced; but, poor girl, she had a tender loving heart, a gentle sensitive nature.

She pined for her father's forgiveness, and

the society of the twin brother who had been her second self.

Gerald was far away with his ship during her brief engagement; but when the young lieutenant returned on leave his sister believed he would come to her, and sent him a warm invitation begging him to spend a few days with them at the farm. That letter was returned to her, torn in half down the middle, without a word, and, poor child, she never held up her head again; not even the little daughter, who came to her with the princess, could restore Mona to health and hope.

She died with her husband's hand in hers, with her last breath begging him to love the child.

As her relations had disowned her in life, Jim Trafford did not give them the chance of following her to the grave.

He buried his dead in the village churchyard, before he sent Lord Trafford a formal notice of his loss, to which the peer never replied; and then it seemed to the young farmer that his connection with the Traffords of Dene was ended.

He believed himself brokenhearted. He told old Martha—who had once been his nurse as she was now his daughter's—he should never hold up his head again.

The old housekeeper did not contradict him, but privately she told herself that to be faithful to the dead was not in man's nature, and at seven-and-twenty a man's life was not over, though he might have loved and lost.

Martha had served the Bartons for nearly thirty years. She had come to the farm with Jim's mother.

She was attached to him; but she had loved his gentle wife with an intense devotion, which she now transferred to the child.

For the first two years of her life little Geraldine Barton had no lack of affection and motherly care.

Mrs. Brown still performed all the duties of manager and housekeeper, but she made the baby her first thought.

The child was dressed—the neighbours said—fit for a princess, and ruled over her old nurse with despotic sway.

And then there came a change. James Barton, from shutting himself up at home, and moping in all his leisure time, began to go about among his neighbours, and accept such hospitality as was offered him.

In Mona's time they had only visited at the Rectory and the Doctor's, for the farmers' wives did not make advances to the pretty fragile creature, so different from themselves; but now Mr. Barton seemed to place himself on a lower level.

He was intimate with people he had not cared to associate with even as a bachelor, and Martha Brown, who had keen eyes in spite of her fifty years, decided in her own mind it meant mischief!

Mr. Barton grew silent and moody at home. He took to spending most of his leisure away, and never seemed to have any time for his little girl.

Martha Brown asked no questions. She felt she should get no satisfaction from the master; but one sunny June day, when the work was done betimes, she dressed "Miss Baby" in her best attire, and sallied forth to walk the long two miles which divided the Uplands Farm from Hatherton Rectory.

The Rector was a gentleman of the old school, whom the poor worshipped and the farmers called "proud;" but there were no opinions about his wife, everyone loved Mrs. Lily.

She was a favourite with all classes; rich and poor, high and low, came to pour their sorrows into her ear.

She could seldom go to them, for she suffered from disease of the spine, and could not walk from one room to another.

She had been Mona Barton's chief friend in Hatherton. She was the baby's godmother, and therefore Martha Brown thought her the best person to consult upon what she called

the "strange change that had come to the master."

"Well Martha," cried Mrs. Lily, pleasantly, when the neat parlour maid had put a chair for the visitor close to the sofa. "What a long time it is since you have been to see me. How baby does grow! I suppose, though, now you will soon leave off calling her baby?"

"It seems to suit her now," returned Martha, "and her own name's far too grand for a mite like her."

"My girls will be delighted to show Baby their treasures," said Mrs. Lily, gently, for she saw there was something amiss, and guessed Mrs. Brown would speak more freely without the child's brown eyes watching her.

The girls were pleasant little maidens of twelve and fourteen; they accepted the charge of little Geraldine very willingly, and Martha watched her nursling go off with them before she said, sadly,—

"I reckon you can guess what I want to say, ma'am. I'm not blind. There's been a change coming over the master these three months. I'm pretty sure he's minding to bring home a mistress for the Farm, and I want you to tell me who."

"Do you mean Mr. Barton has not spoken to you, Martha?" asked Mrs. Lily, rather distressed. "Why, the banns will be out on Sunday; he was here telling the Rector last night."

"Ah!" and Martha Brown sighed. "Well, I've been prepared for it. He told me, ma'am, when she went he should never hold up his head again; but I knew better—to be faithful to the dead is not in man's nature. It's odd I've no suspicion even who it is. I've always discouraged the servants to bring me tales, and it's seldom I have the time to go out, so I expect the whole parish would know before me."

Mrs. Lily did not like her task.

"Is Barbara Treadgold, Martha. I am afraid you'll be surprised; we were."

"Barbara Treadgold!" exclaimed the old servant. "Oh, ma'am, you don't say so! Why, her father began as a farm labourer, and her mother was only a servant no better than me. Mr. James, who's good blood is him, to mate with such as she—why, it's not credible!"

"I am very sorry," and the Rector's wife only spoke the truth. "I have not been here long enough to know the origin of the Treadgolts; but Barbara is much beneath Mr. Barton. He could pass in any society, and she—I dare say she's a good-meaning, sensible woman, but I confess I can't bear to think of her in Mona Barton's place."

"Isaac Treadgold has made money, but the master's not the man to think of that," commented Martha. "I don't know if you understand, ma'am, but I'm sure I can't."

Mrs. Lily hesitated.

"Mr. Barton is a handsome man, and, though not rich, he is in a better position than the Treadgolts. I don't want to be spiteful, but I think Barbara made up her mind to marry him, and he walked blindly into the snare."

"And they are to be called in church next Sunday?"

"Yes. Mr. Barton said he wanted his wife to be quite settled at the farm before harvest time."

"Ugh!" said Martha. "Much good may she do it. I wonder when Mr. Jim will tell me?"

"Will it make a difference to you, Martha? Shall you care to stay on under a new mistress?"

"I shall not care for it, ma'am; but I shall stay unless she turns me out, for Miss Baby's sake. I've saved a bit of money. My late master left me a legacy, and I could do with less wages if that was an object."

"If you find things uncomfortable, should you like to come to us?" asked Mrs. Lily. "My old nurse is leaving, and I want a responsible person in her stead to look after the servants and attend to me. Then, though my

girls are old enough not to want a nurse, they can't mend their own clothes yet, so that we should find plenty for you to do."

Martha Brown looked at the lady gratefully.

"It's like you to think of it, ma'am, and I'd be proud to serve you. It seems paying you a poor gratitude, to prefer Barbara Treadgold as a mistress to you; but, you see, it's the little one. I promised her mother I'd take care of her, and—"

"I quite understand," said Mrs. Lily, pressing the toil-worn hand in hers kindly; "but remember, Martha, if ever you leave the Uplands Farm I have always a home for you here. I think we could make you happy, and it would not be going so far away from Mona's child as leaving Hatherton entirely."

Martha and her nursling stayed to tea in the dear old-fashioned Rectory schoolroom. The governess was gone for the day, and the old nurse presided, telling Mrs. Brown how sore her heart was at leaving the friends she loved so well.

"But there, my mother's an old woman, and well on in her seventies, so I can't refuse to go to her. I'd hoped to stay here till the young ladies married, and dress them for their wedding, as I did Miss Marion, Mrs. Tindal that is, formerly; but I can't see my way to it. I only hope the mistress'll find someone who can value a good home."

Martha Brown went back to the Uplands with a heavy heart. She had reigned supreme in the big farm-house kitchen as long as she did not like to think her rule was well-nigh over. She had never expected Mr. Barton to be faithful to the dead, but she did think he might have looked higher in his second choice, and she resented his actually putting up the banns before he spoke of the change to her.

"I guess he feels ashamed of himself," decided the good woman, "and he always put off an unpleasant task, did Master James."

But he put it off no longer. For a chance he was home to eight o'clock supper, and did not go out again afterwards. He sat half-smootherly by the window, where the honeysuckle Mona's hands had planted, the one summer she spent at Hatherton, peeped in with its sweet fragrance, and as Martha was leaving the room he called her back.

"Sit down, Martha, I want to speak to you."

She knew what was coming, but she would not help him by a word. He jerked it out somehow, his eyes on the ground meanwhile.

"I'm going to be married again, Martha. You'll hear the banns on Sunday, and we'll have the wedding the last week in July."

The old servant answered nothing. One would have said she did not hear; but James Barton had only half-finished his task, almost the worst part remained.

"Miss Treadgold's an active managing woman," he said, awkwardly, "and won't want such experienced help as yours. I'm sorry to part with you, Martha, but I'm sure you'd never get on with a mistress."

"And Miss Baby, sir," inquired the woman, with a lump in her throat. "I've had the care of her since she was born. Who's to see to her if I go?"

"One of the maids must look to her a bit," returned Mr. Barton, "and, of course, my wife will see after her. Farmer's children don't buy a nurse kept specially for them; you know, Martha, after they can run about."

She made one last effort.

"Your new wife, sir, I'll have plenty to do with the housekeeping. She mayn't like to see after a child, and, of course, if I've lighter work I shall expect lighter pay."

But it was no use. The man knew he was behaving shamefully, and ill-requiting the service of nearly thirty years, but his inside effect's commands had been firm and he had to obey them.

"It's no use, Martha. Miss Treadgold says she'd rather begin entirely fresh. She doesn't want anyone about who's been at the Uplands longer than herself. I needn't tell



you'll give you the best of recommendations. There are many of farmers that'll be too glad to get hold of you."

"Thank you, Mr. James," said the woman, quietly, "but if I leave your service I shall go to another farm. I've heard of a place in Hatherston, and if I can't stay at the Uplands I shall go to it."

"Anyone I know?" asked James with kindly interest.

"Mrs. Lily, sir, your wife's—I should say your first wife's dearest friend."

Barbara Treadgold was not best pleased; she knew Martha Brown because she old servant knew her origin. She had refused to keep her at the farm because she hated the idea of anyone contrasting her with her predecessor; but it was almost as bad for Martha to be only two miles off at the Rectory.

And as Mrs. Lily's housekeeper and maid, Martha Brown would be far better off than as general factotum at the farm. Barbara Treadgold would have given a great deal to see the old servant leave the neighbourhood; but—it was not to be.

## CHAPTER II.

In the Rectory garden one lovely June day—as fine as that other summer day when Martha Brown first heard of Mr. Barton's proposed second marriage—two girls sat in a rustic arbour close in conversation. Both were young and both were pretty, but here all resemblance between them ceased.

Beatrice Tindal was the only child of wealthy parents: her father an Indian judge, her mother a leader in Anglo-Indian society. Both longed for their child's return, and now that she was nearly eighteen, Beatrice was very soon going out to join them.

She had been for nearly a dozen years an inmate of Hatherston Rectory. Mr. and Mrs. Lily loved her as their own child. Miss Lily, a gentle, thoughtful woman of thirty, petted her pretty niece, and, in fact, if Beatrice had not possessed one of the sweetest, most generous of dispositions, she would long ago have been spoiled.

She was a tiny, fairy-like creature, with masses of flaxen hair which had a golden gleam in the sunshine, dark, tender blue eyes, and a complexion unspiced by sun or wind.

All Hatherston adored Miss Tindal much as they did her grandmother. All the daughters of the Rectory had come to gladden other homes except "Aunt Grace," and she had had a crushing sorrow in her early youth which had robbed her of her bloom.

Betty Miss Tindal wore a dress of light blue tulle, and a big rustic straw hat trimmed with a wreath of forget-me-nots. She was talking gaily, and yet with a touch of sadness at times which proved her feelings were deeply stirred.

"So it is really settled. Grandpapa says this escort is too good to lose, so in September I am to go to India, and all the last month Aunt Grace and I are to be in London stopping, just as though I was never to have any cousin again."

"And are you glad?" asked the other girl, and her voice had a ring of sadness as though she thought Beatrice's piece of news decidedly "bad."

"It's like orange marmalade," sighed Trix, "a delicious mixture of sweet and bitter; I'm glad and sorry too. Of course, when one has a father and mother it's nice to be with them, but Hatherston seems my real home. I was only five when I came, and I've been as happy here as any girl could be. I love every stone of this dear old Rectory, and when I think I may never see Hatherston again, I feel ready to cry."

"And I should be thankful," said the other girl, "if I were never to see Hatherston again. I hate the place Trix, and when you are gone it will be more hostile than ever."

She was quite a head taller than Trix, and looked much older than her friend, though really there were only six months between them.

She was pretty, too, but in a very different style. Her skin was fair and colourless, her hair, the softest, silkiest brown, was just the tint of a freshly-shelled chestnut, and her eyes were brown, too, of wondrous size and softness, their long dark lashes showed up her clear complexion. Her broad, open forehead showed signs of intelligence; but her hands bore the mark of much homely toil.

Her dress, a pink cotton, had been so often to the wash-tub it had lost much of its original colour, and her brown hat was bent out of shape by two years of constant wear. Such was Geraldine Barton, grandchild of Lord Trafford of Dene.

Not that either her grand name or high-born connections were of any use to the girl. Mrs. Barton, who was a stolid, matter-of-fact woman, declared from the first "Geraldine" was far too grand for everyday use. "Dina," she avowed, was quite long enough, and much more sensible, being in the Bible, though the only Dina she had ever heard of in modern times killed herself by poison.

Probably Mrs. Barton was thinking of the song "Vilkins and his Dina," as she invariably pronounced her step-daughter's name like the heroine's in that ballad.

From the birth of her first half brother Geraldine became Dina, and most people by this time had forgotten she was not christened so.

Dina herself had no idea she possessed any noble kindred. Mrs. Barton was not likely to tell the girl, since she was always snubbing her, and exalting the younger children at her expense, and by the time Dina was old enough to understand such things most people had forgotten pretty Miss Barton's high descent, save indeed the family at the Rectory, who were careful not to mention the subject since they feared nothing so much as Mrs. Barton's putting a peremptory stop to Dina's visits.

Things had not gone well at the Uplands after Martha Brown left. Barbara Treadgold had been a notable managing person; but Barbara Barton had nine children in the first thirteen years of her married life, which meant that there was always a baby on hand to occupy her attention.

Then the servants engaged on her marriage had been a failure, and the new ones who followed were worse.

Her father died. Her brother sold the farm, and departed to another county where he could hold up his head.

The weather, the soil, and other things all told hard on James Barton. His family increased as his resources diminished, bad seasons, bad management, sickness, all tried him in turn, until now he really had a very hard struggle to make both ends meet.

There was a mortgage on the Uplands, and though Mrs. Barton took a delight in dressing Dina shabbily and making her useful at home, there was just this much to be said in her defence, that poverty had her in its grip, and money was very hard to come by.

Martha Brown had watched the changes with a sinking heart; but she knew that even had she remained at the farm after Barbara's home coming, she should have left in a few months.

The second Mrs. Barton was a shrew, and her temper grew so unbearable that no one put up with it who could possibly escape.

Mr. Lily for once turned practical and did what he could for Dina, to please his wife. When little Beatrice Tindal came to Hatherston, and a schoolroom had to be set up again, Mr. Lily offered the Bartons for Dina to share his grandchild's lessons.

She was six when the proposal was made, and already being victimized as child-nurse to the three boys, of whom her step-mother was so proud. For once in his life James Barton held his own against Barbara, who was for refusing the Rectory's offer outright.

"The child must learn to read and write," he said, quietly, "and you have no time to teach her; but for this chance I should have sent her to school."

"It will turn her head, and make her fit for nothing."

"I don't think so. Anyway, wife, I mean to accept Mr. Lily's offer. For six hours a day Dina will go to the Rectory. You can teach her useful things in the rest."

Mrs. Barton gave in. Perhaps she consoled herself by thinking it would be for the good of her own brood, since later on she could convert Dina into an unpaid governess.

For ten years Geraldine and Beatrice learnt their lessons together. Dina dining with her friend, and returning to the farm by three.

It was a hard struggle to keep up with Trix, who had nothing to do the rest of the day but prepare her lessons; but Dina loved study, and she loved the Rectory. She told Nurse Brown once that from nine till three she felt as if she were in heaven!

At sixteen Mrs. Barton interfered, and peremptorily refused to spare Dina any longer, so the daily visits were given up. But Beatrice had a knack of getting her own way; she would drive over to the Uplands, and absolutely coax Barbara into sparing her step-child for an hour or two; and so the girlish friendship had never really been interrupted until now, when Trix was going to India, and poor Dina would be left behind.

"Must you really go?" asked Trix, as Dina rose and began setting her hat. "Remember, dear, my time in England is getting short."

"I know," Dina's eyes said more than her words, "but I promised to be home by seven."

"Dina," said little Trix, pleadingly, as she kissed her friend, "I want you to promise me something. Remember, in ten weeks I shall be gone—it may be for ever."

"I know, Trix, I would promise you anything if only I could do it."

"And this is quite easy. When I am gone away, if things go wrong at the farm and Mrs. Barton is unkind to you, I want you to tell Grumpy."

"But—"

"Oh, I know," said Trix, rather petulantly, "you think it's wrong to grumble, but, Dina, Mrs. Barton hates you. If by sacrificing you she could make things easy for her own children she'd do it at once. Now, all I ask you is—if ever she wants you to do anything you hate, just come and tell Grumpy."

"Trix," said Geraldine, slowly, "please speak plainly. I know there is something in your mind."

"Yes, there is, but I'm not going to tell you any more. I'm not asking you to come here with stories of Mrs. Barton's petty wickedness. Only if ever she asks you to do some big thing that you hate the very thought of, before you make up your mind it's a duty to sacrifice yourself, just come and ask Grumpy's advice."

And thus pressed, Dina gave the promise. She did not in the least understand the emergency in Trix's mind; but she knew her little friend was far keener-sighted than herself, and she felt certain Beatrice would never have asked for the promise had she not felt a trouble threatened her.

Sadly Dina passed through the Rectory gates and turned into the winding lane which led to the Uplands farm. It was not still, for the sun had been unusually powerful for June, but Dina dared not linger as she knew she should only just get home by seven, and were she only five minutes late her step-mother might make her tardy return an excuse for not letting her go to the Rectory again.

So Dina walked on quietly, a load at her heart as she thought of the coming parting from Trix, and just a passing wonder why her fate was so sad and pitiable, her friend's so bright and happy.

It was not only the poverty of her home which tried Dina, it was the constant bicker-

ing and gambling which prevailed. Mrs. Barton did not scruple to reproach her husband before their children for his failure. She often told him it was an evil day for her when she came to the Uplands Farm. Hard work and no comfort had been her portion ever since.

James Barton never retaliated, but his grave face had a sad, haggard look. He grew to stoop like an old man. Dina, who understood him as none of the others did, knew that he positively winced under his wife's sharp tongue, but she dared not even try to comfort him. There was nothing angered Barbara more than to perceive any confidence between her husband and his first-born. She resented it almost as a personal injury.

There was not much to hurry back to yet. Dina walked quickly on, knowing if she was late she should be scolded, but the place where all her young life had been spent had no attraction for her. The Uplands had been a substantial farm-house when James Barton inherited it from his father. Pretty Mona had declared she loved the quaint old homestead, and would not suffer any alteration to be made for her beyond the purchase of a low chair and a comfortable sofa.

Under Martha Brown's rule the old oak had shone till you could see your face in it. Spotlessly white blinds and curtains had relieved the sombre furniture. The house and furniture had been as clean as hands could make them, and everything arranged to the best advantage; but all was changed now.

The wear and tear of nine spoilt children had ruined such of the furniture as was perishable; the old oak was chipped and scratched, and looked dull and lustreless; the carpet was threadbare, the blinds awry. Most of the chairs were rickety, and table linen and crockery were scanty and defective since in sixteen years neither had been renewed.

When Isaac Treadgold died, her mother had given Barbara a few things she thought not worth moving. A showy gilt mirror, tarnished in many places, an old-fashioned piano and some faded moreen curtains. They looked out of keeping with the Barton furniture, which had been bought "to last."

She was nearly there—only another field to cross, and Dina would be at the old white gate which led to her home—but as she climbed over the last stile it was to find someone waiting for her in the field of waving grass, and to see, greeting her with bow and smile, Wilfred Lomax, a comparatively new arrival in Hatherton, and one whom Dina heartily disliked.

Mr. Lomax had been a lawyer, but, his investments turning out remarkably well, he had retired and settled down to enjoy the fruits of his success. That was the general version of his story.

He had taken the Grange on a lease of three years with the option of purchasing the property at the end of that time if he pleased.

The Grange was the nearest house to Uplands, and, though a far more pretentious dwelling, had been occupied by a plain old farmer on very friendly terms with the Bartons. He expressed a wish they should be "neighbourly" to his tenant, and from this an acquaintance sprang up, and the newcomer seemed a great favourite with the mistress of the Uplands.

It was a year now since Mr. Lomax came to the Grange, but he did not seem very popular in Hatherton. The Bartons' was the only house he visited at, and Dina often wondered why her stepmother, who hated people "dropping in," was gracious to Mr. Lomax at what ever hour of the twenty-four he chose to make his appearance; while another puzzle to her was what the retired lawyer could possibly find at the Uplands Farm to bring him there so often.

He was a man far on the shady side of thirty, who always dressed with scrupulous care—even now in the hay-field his toilet was perfection. Dina once said, pettishly, if there was a railway accident and Mr. Lomax had

to pass the night in a tunnel, exposed to the grime of smuts and smoke, he would emerge the next morning looking as if he had stepped out of a band-box.

"That is because he is a gentleman," retorted Mrs. Barton, "and so is prepared for anything."

Dina attempted no reply, but deep down in her heart she thought Mr. Lomax was not a gentleman, and that his invariably careful dress was only one of the many efforts he made to appear as one. She could not have put her finger on the want, but instinct told her Wilfred Lomax lacked something essential to gentle birth.

He was a tall man, with broad shoulders, black hair and moustache, dark eyes, and a nose which suggested Jewish extraction, albeit his name had nothing Hebrew about it. He had a little too much colour, and was a trifle inclined to be stout, but Mrs. Barton always quoted him as a very fine man indeed.

"Why, Miss Barton," he exclaimed, in his silkiest tones, "how tired you look! I am afraid you have been walking too quickly this hot evening."

"I am rather tired," confessed Dina, "but I was obliged to hurry. I promised mother to be in by seven."

"I have just seen Mrs. Barton; she commissioned me to tell you there was no need for haste, so I hope you will not race across this field. You don't take half enough care of yourself, Miss Dina."

"Oh, I am very strong," replied the girl. "Good evening, Mr. Lomax, I must not stay talking here."

But the lawyer was standing directly in her path; without absolute rudeness, it was impossible for her to pass him.

"There is no hurry," he said, airily; "and I want to talk to you. It is as difficult to get a word with you, Miss Dina, as though you were a cloistered nun. What is the use of my haunting the Uplands Farm till your mother must be tired of the very sight of me, if you can never spare me five minutes?"

A most disagreeable fear seized Dina. Was Mr. Lomax in his right mind? Could he—oh! horrible thought—have been drinking?

"You must excuse me," she said, firmly, "but I am anxious to get home."

"I told Mrs. Barton I should wait here for you; she'll quite understand. You need not fear being scolded when you get in; it only rests with yourself never to be scolded again. I only want your consent to protect you from even the breath of an angry word."

Dina grew crimson. "Please let me go," and she wrenched her hand away—quite in vain, for Mr. Lomax immediately possessed himself of the other.

"Perhaps I have frightened you by speaking so suddenly," he said, in his smooth, silky tones; "but it was time you understood that I am in earnest. I am very fond of you, Dina, and I want you to be my wife."

If he had offered to make her Archbishop of Canterbury, Dina could hardly have felt more astonished. She was eighteen, but no thoughts of love or marriage had ever troubled her.

She knew, of course, that such things were. She had seen girls no older than herself leave Hatherton as brides, but Dina had never thought of such a fate for herself.

To stay at home and teach the children; to mend stockings, and iron "fine things," had seemed her destiny; and, lo! here was Wilfred Lomax offering to marry her.

Poor child! poor motherless girl! There must have been some wondrous instinct at work within her.

She had never read a novel; had never been really intimate with a pair of lovers. Apparently, Wilfred Lomax must love her, since there could be no other inducement to lead him to propose to her; and yet his wooing never stirred a pulse of Dina's heart. If this was love, why, then, she would live out her life without love; but, in her soul, she did not believe in Mr. Lomax's protestations.

"I am too young to marry," she told her suitor, simply; "and your wife ought to be a much wiser and more dignified person than I am. Please say no more about it, Mr. Lomax."

She had moved again, to show that she considered the conversation over; but Lomax had no mind to let her go.

"You can't expect me to give up the hope of months in a moment," he said, eagerly. "You are eighteen, and girls no older marry every day. If I am a few years your senior, there is no real disparity between our ages."

"I don't want to be married," said Dina, blushing as she spoke. "I have never thought about it."

"Then think about it now," said Lomax, persuasively. "I am not asking you to marry me at once. I will wait till you have had time to 'think about it,' and till you have learned to care for me."

Privately, Dina thought in the last case he would wait for ever, but aloud she only said, quietly,—

"Please believe me, Mr. Lomax, I am grateful to you for your kindness, but I mean just what I say—it can never be."

"Why not? Is there anyone else? Though you are 'too young' to think of marrying me, have you lost your heart to another?"

Dina raised her little head with a new, strange dignity.

"You have no right to ask the question," she said, gravely; "but I do not mind telling you there is no one."

"Then I shall not despair," rejoined Lomax, airily. "In time I shall win you. I shall cage my little shy bird yet, if I have patience."

Dina made one last effort.

"If you have any kindly feeling for me, Mr. Lomax, you will take my answer. I mean just what I say. I know it is very generous of you to wish to marry a penniless girl like me, but it can never be. And if," she hesitated, "if mother knew of your wishes, she might be very angry."

"With you, or me?"

"With me," very slowly.

"Ah! I expect Mrs. Barton will be my best friend," said Lomax, thoughtfully; "she promised me to-night to use all her influence with you in my favour."

"You have told her!"

"Assuredly," said Lomax, with his eyes fixed on the lovely, troubled face. "I am a man of honour, Miss Dina; I would not propose to any girl without the consent of her parents. I spoke to you to-night with your mother's sanction; only she was too hopeful. She made me anticipate a very different reception."

Dina turned on him with flashing eyes.

"Then she lied to you! If Mrs. Barton—I cannot call her mother—made you think I cared for you, it was a falsehood!"

## CHAPTER III.

SIXTEEN years had changed Mrs. Barton as much as most people. She had been a buxom, high-coloured, healthy young woman of twenty-six when she came home to the Uplands Farm, but the cares of a large family, failing health, and money worries, had made her almost a wreck. She was only forty-two, but she looked fifty; tall and attenuated; her features sharpened by ill health.

She seemed a peevish, discontented woman; her temper, never good, had deteriorated. The fact that her husband yielded to her in every thing had helped to make her a vixen, until at last Barbara Barton united in herself the two worst faults of womanhood—she was a passionate virago, and—alas! for husband and children—a querulous, nagging, repining grumbler as well.

If only she had cheered him instead of reproaching him, James Barton would not have lost heart so soon. Home was a very unhome-like place to him, and he was there as little as



possible, so as to avoid the stabs of his wife's sharp tongue.

Gladly would Dina have avoided them, too, on the June evening when she had received her first offer; but she knew it would be a fresh offence if she did not appear to relieve her mother of the children. So, when she had taken off her hat, she was going down to the sitting-room; but Susan, the stout farm-servant, and the three smaller girls met her on the way.

"I'm to see to them to-night, Miss Dina, and the master's taken the others for a walk. Missus wants you downstairs!"

As she went on reluctantly there flashed across Dina's mind Beatrice Tindal's strange request. "If ever Mrs. Barton wants you to make some big sacrifice for her, before you consent promise me to come here and ask granny!"

Could it be that others had seen Mr. Lomax's object, and that that was what Beatrice meant by her strange demand?

Probably not; but the bare idea gave Dina courage. After all, her stepmother could do no more than turn her out of the old homestead, and Mrs. Lily was so kind she would find her a situation. No one would miss her at the farm unless it was her father.

Yes, she would be brave; at most it could only be she would have to go out into the world and earn her bread, and she could hardly meet with a more exacting task-mistress than her stepmother. So she pushed open the door of the sitting-room, and went in cheerfully enough to outward seeming, though her heart was beating like a sledge hammer. She was not prepared for Mrs. Barton's reception.

"Come and kiss me, Dina," she said, in an agitated manner. "I haven't always been kind to you, for I grudged your father's love for you; but I shall never speak a harsh word to you again. You have saved us from ruin."

Dina began to think reproaches would have been easier to bear.

"I don't understand, mother," she began, slowly; "how can Mr. Lomax ruin us?"

"He will not do it now," said Mrs. Barton. "For months I have been hoping to hear what he told me to-night. Don't you know that this farm is mortgaged almost to its full value?"

"I knew that father had to raise some money on it a few years ago."

"Five years ago," said Mrs. Barton, who had a painfully accurate memory. "It was the spring before Janey was born. There came a snowstorm the end of April, and all the crops were ruined. He borrowed three thousand pounds on the security of the farm and stock. The interest was to be ten per cent., paid half-yearly—ruinous, of course, but he could get no better terms."

"But that would be three hundred a year," gasped Dina, who knew enough of the farm to feel sure such a large sum had never been extracted from it besides their own expenses.

"Yes, and not a penny of it has been paid. I have spoken to your father again and again, but he always declared that it would be time enough to worry when the money was asked for. The interest now amounts to fifteen hundred pounds, or, with the original debt, four thousand five hundred."

"But what has that to do with Mr. Lomax?"

"Everything. The mortgagee sold his claim on the property to Wilfred Lomax a year ago. I have known it now for nearly nine months. We were utterly in his power. He had only to give a half-year's notice, and the farm, stock, furniture, in fact everything we have, would become his unless we could repay the principal and interest. When Mr. Lomax told me to-night he wanted to marry you I could have cried for joy."

"But I have refused him."

Was the surprise on Mrs. Barton's face real or feigned? Had she taken Dina's acceptance of Wilfred Lomax for granted, hoping to work on the girl's feelings?

"Then you have ruined us all. How is your father to raise nearly five thousand pounds in six months when he has never yet been able to pay the yearly interest? You are a selfish, heartless girl. We shall all go to the workhouse, and much you'll care!"

"Perhaps Mr. Lomax will wait?" said Dina, with a hopefulness she did not feel.

"Wait! And if he did, what chance is there of our finding the money?—don't you know it is as much as we can do to feed the children and clothe them? If Wilfred Lomax waited fifty years we shouldn't have the money; and, of course, he won't wait. Why should he put himself out of the way to oblige a jilt?"

"Mother, mother!"—there was an agony in poor Dina's voice. "Don't call me that!"

"What else are you? I'm sure you have encouraged the poor man enough; and what do you expect, pray, if the owner of fifteen hundred a year isn't good enough for you?"

"I do not care for him," said Dina, slowly, "and something tells me I never could."

"You'll never care for anyone but yourself," was the cutting answer. "I did think you had some feeling for your father, but I suppose I was mistaken, or you'd not be so ready to see him in the workhouse!"

"I don't deserve your reproaches, mother," said the poor child, faintly. "When Mr. Lomax asked me to marry him, I had no idea he possessed the power to ruin us."

"Well, you know it now, and I daresay it's not too late. He seemed wonderfully set on you, though what he can see in a pale ghost of a creature like you I can't think. If he comes to-morrow, will you be reasonable?"

Poor Dina! she was terribly tempted to say "yes" to sacrifice her glad young life, her whole future, to her family; but at that moment Mr. Barton and the children came in from their walk, and she thankfully escaped from the room on the plea of putting the little girls to bed, and did not return to supper, thus avoiding further persuasions that night.

There was very little sleep for Dina. She had a tiny slip of a room to herself, and never had she felt more thankful for the privilege.

She knew that the quiet hours of the night would be the only time for solitude; before she left her bed she must have decided the question, and made up her mind one way or the other.

She knew, if she faced her stepmother again before the decision was made, Mrs. Barton would mould her like wax to her own will.

If only she had liked Wilfred Lomax the sacrifice would have been easier. If she had liked him as she liked the dear old Rector, or the Professor who years ago had taught her and Beatrice music, why, then Dina would not have minded so much, and would have tried to believe if Mr. Lomax wanted a wife who could only give him esteem and respect, it was not her fault; but, unluckily, she was not indifferent to the retired lawyer; she was conscious of a real dislike to him—not a vindictive hatred or a violent aversion—only a distaste for his society, and a feeling of weariness if forced to endure much of it. Analysing her own sensations in the silence of the night, Dina decided she feared and distrusted him, and that if she had to live with him always she should end by hating him.

"I can't do it," thought the poor child; "but, oh! how miserable refusing him will make my life. If father is ruined I shall never forgive myself; and even if we get the money by a miracle mother will always taunt me with all he might have done for the children. Oh! I wish Mr. Lomax had never come to Hather-ton!"

She was stirring early, for it was her duty to dress the younger children. Going downstairs to fetch something, she found her father waiting about in a listless sort of way. It was very unlike his custom, for usually he was about the farm very early, only returning in time for breakfast.

His face brightened as he caught sight of Dina, and he drew her out into the porch, conscious perhaps that his wife's room faced the

other way, and so they were safe from her watchfulness.

"My dear," he said, simply, "I know what has happened. I own if you could have fancied Lomax it would have been a relief; but, Geraldine, I won't have you marry him for our sakes. Things have gone pretty badly with me lately, but there are plenty of years' work left in me. If the Uplands is sold I'll get a post as bailiff or manager. I'd rather be a day labourer than that your mother's child should sacrifice her happiness for me and mine!"

Dina clung to him with a mute caress.

"How good you are to me, dad."

He shook his head.

"Far from that, Dina; but I've some manhood left in me yet, and I won't have my daughter sold to pay my debts, which is what it comes to. You keep firm, child; there'll be trouble indoors, but I'll stand by you."

"Mother will be very angry."

"Aye! she declares the farm is her children's heritage, and she won't have it lost; but I'm not going to have you sacrificed. Only, Dina, things won't be pleasant for you at home. We shall soon be leaving the old place, and may be it'll be thrown in your teeth that you're the cause."

"I don't mind anything, dad, so long as you don't blame me. I think I had better try and get a situation; Mrs. Lily would help me she is so kind."

"You'd better go and see her to-day. I've told my wife you're to have a clear week to think over things, and you're not to be badgered about Lomax till it's over; but there'll be a terrible row, Dina, and it would be best if you could be away before the week's over!"

She lifted her eyes to his.

"Dad, I do so wish I could help you. I think I would work my fingers to the bone if that would give you the money. I would do anything in the world except—"

"Except marry Lomax," said Mr. Barton, sadly. "My dear child, I don't blame you, and you're not to fret, Dina. Life hasn't been so happy for me at the Uplands these last years that I should grieve over leaving the old place; but, you see, I was born here, Dina, and my father before me."

Mrs. Barton came down actually in a good temper. She had received a note from Mr. Lomax intimating he had not accepted Dina's hasty rejection. She was young, and he had taken her by surprise. He would give her time to think over his wishes, and in another week would come to the farm for his answer.

Dina slipped away after breakfast without asking leave of absence, for she guessed it would be denied her.

She knew that Beatrice and her aunt were going up to London, so if she went to the Rectory that morning she should find Mrs. Lily alone.

Seven days would not be long to find a new home and, as it were, plan a new life. The sooner she consulted her kind old friend the better.

The Rector's wife showed no surprise as she listened.

"My dear child," she said, when Dina paused, "everyone at Hather-ton has guessed Mr. Lomax's intentions but yourself. My wilful Trix wanted to warn you weeks ago, but I would not let her."

"And you believe it is not my fault?"

"Surely! But, Geraldine—to call you by your own name for once—Mrs. Barton will never forgive you."

"I know. She and father will lose their home through me. When I think of it my heart feels almost broken."

Mrs. Lily was silent so long, Dina grew frightened.

"I told father I could get a situation," she said, gravely. "Do you think I am too young or ignorant? I would do my best and not mind how hard I worked."

Mrs. Lily smiled.

"My dear, I was thinking of a situation for

you even before you came here to-day. By a strange chance I heard of one by this morning's post, and I told Trix if it was not treason to Mrs. Barton I should mention it to you, for I considered your talents wasted at the Uplands."

"And what is it?"

"There was a strange, dreamy look in the invalid's eyes, but her smile was very sweet."

"My youngest daughter told me of it, Dina; perhaps you remember her."

"I remember Mrs. Dore perfectly," said Dina. "She was like Miss Grace, only brighter."

Mrs. Lily smiled.

"Amy lives in Blankshire, and one of her nearest neighbours is a Mrs. Trafford, a widow with one son. Amy told her in her last letter Mrs. Trafford was seeking a companion, and asked me if I knew of anyone. It seems she is rather nervous, poor lady, and dreads advertising, since a friend of hers engaged a drunken cook through a most misleading advertisement. Now, Dina, I believe I can get this situation for you; but if so, it will be better for no one at the Uplands to hear where you are going."

"But I may tell father?"

"My dear child, if you do you will make his life a burden to him, for Mrs. Barton will give him no peace until she has extracted your address, then she will worry you with written reproaches every day, and perhaps send Mr. Lomax down to Blankshire to continue his wooing."

Dina's cheeks grew crimson.

"I see," she whispered, shily. "You are quite right; but it seems unkind."

"Ask Mr. Barton to come and see me. I will explain my reasons to him."

"Father never goes anywhere."

"Why, Dina, he and your own mother were our most frequent visitors, once. He won't refuse me half-an-hour."

And, to his child's surprise, James Barton went down to the Rectory that very afternoon.

"I will find Dina a situation among gentle people who will treat her as one of themselves," said Mrs. Lily; "but, Mr. Barton, while Wilfred Lomax is still a frequent visitor at your house, I think it would be better if I told you no more than that Dina's new home is near my married daughter's house in Blankshire."

Jim nodded.

"I'd rather not know any more, Mrs. Lily. I can trust you to send Dina where she will be kindly treated. Poor child! life hasn't been made very happy for her at home, and it will be worse now."

Very hardly had Mrs. Lily thought of him all these years, but she relented now; after all, he was weak, not wicked.

"Are you sure Mr. Lomax makes a fair claim on you?" she asked, kindly. "I may tell you this much, the Rector knows he is a professional money-lender, and a very sharp business man."

"I can believe it. His claim is fair enough. If only they had insisted on the interest as it fell, due I shouldn't have been in such a mess. There was a clause in the agreement that while the interest was paid regularly they couldn't be foreclosed without a year's notice; besides, the original loan was under the value of the place, and if I could have proved I paid the interest regularly, I could easily have found another capitalist who would have taken the transfer of the mortgage on the same terms."

"It looks to me as though Wilfred Lomax plotted for your ruin."

"Yes; he says he wanted some strong inducement to make Geraldine listen to him, and yet it never struck me he was so very much in love with her; true he's nearer forty than thirty, so perhaps he wouldn't show his feelings like a younger man."

Mr. Barton told his wife Dina would be better away during her "week of grace," and that Mrs. Lily wanted her to join her daughter and grandchild in London. Barbara tossed

her head and said Dina had no business to go pleasuring until she had made up her mind to be a good girl and marry Mr. Lomax, but in the end she gave way, and even bade her stepdaughter a very civil good-bye.

Grace Lily was too like her mother for Dina not to feel at home with her at once.

She purchased a complete outfit for her young friend, telling her, when she remonstrated at the cost, that it was Beatrice's parting present, and as Blankshire was rather gay for a country place, she would need all the purchases. Before they had had time to feel anxious about it, Mrs. Trafford's letter arrived. She expressed herself delighted to have a friend of Mrs. Lily's as companion. She led a very quiet life, and was very much alone, as her only son was the adopted heir of her distant cousin, Lord Trafford, and spent much of his time with him. She was not rich herself, and could only offer Miss Barton a small salary of thirty pounds a year.

"It sounds riches to me," said Dina, "and how kindly she writes."

"Amy says she is the nicest person in Blankshire, and, Dina, it is quite true that she is poor. Her husband was an officer in the army, and at his death she was left very badly off. She brought up her son as a lawyer without the slightest help from his rich relations; but Lord Trafford lost his only surviving son two years ago, and since that, as Mr. Trafford must inherit his title and estate, he has been a good deal patronized by the peer. He persists in keeping on his post as manager to a large firm of solicitors, but he spends a good deal of time with Lord and Lady Trafford, and they are quite wrapped up in him."

"He ought not to neglect his own mother," said Dina, with youthful severity.

"He doesn't; he is a devoted son, but he can't be often in Blankshire, and I daresay his mother has many lonely hours."

#### CHAPTER IV.

MRS. BARTON was intensely angry when the last day of the week of grace expired, and her husband told her Geraldine had decided to refuse Wilfred Lomax, and that he would himself announce her decision to the retired lawyer.

"It means ruin," she said, bitterly, "ruin for me and my children, just because you encourage that stuck-up child in her nonsense."

James Barton sighed; but though he was a weak man, for once he held his ground.

"After all, Barbara, I don't see why you should expect the child to sacrifice her life's happiness to our interests. We haven't done so much for her, poor little thing."

"Why should eleven people suffer through one?" retorted his wife; "but there, you care nothing for my children."

"I care a great deal," said Mr. Barton, sadly; "but, Barbara, your getting angry with me won't mend matters. My dear, you need to have a rare head for business. I wish you'd just put Dina's refusal out of your mind and listen to me."

Mrs. Barton put down her work, and looked a little more amiable; she was flattered at his wanting her opinion.

"Supposing, Barbara, I could pay off the interest of the mortgage, say, and the principal too, and start a free man?"

"Why, your fortune would be made," she said, promptly. "That is why I am so angry with Dina. Mr. Lomax offers you a release in full the day he marries her, and, after all we have suffered through borrowing, of course you would never do it again."

"I doubt if anyone would care to lend. For five years there has been no money spent on the farm. The soil is poor, the fences broken to pieces, the house out of repair. To make the Uplands pay, I should have to lay out nearly a thousand pounds on repairs and stock."

Mrs. Barton looked suspicious.

"Do you mean it, Jim?"

"I mean that for years I have carried on the farm without getting more than a bare living out of it. I have taken out of the land and spent nothing on improving it. Every year I go on like this the place decreases in value; and if Dina married Lomax to-morrow, though his release would keep the property in our family, I shouldn't be a penny richer than I have been the last ten years, rather poorer."

"Then what are we to do?"

"I expect Lomax will foreclose, if so, everything must go, and we shall have to begin the world afresh. I shall get a situation as bailiff or agent. It won't be so pleasant to be man instead of master; but, oh! what a comfort to have a fixed, certain income."

"I believe, even now, Mr. Lomax would wait if you managed him properly."

"It would be no use. Barbara, I don't often interfere, but in this you must let me have my own way. Mr. Lomax shall be told plainly Dina refuses him."

But James Barton was not in the least prepared for the anger Lomax showed at the news. The man seemed to be changed into a perfect fury. He raved at the farmer, told him he would ruin the whole family, and be their bitter foe as long as he lived.

"Softly, Mr. Lomax," said James Barton, quietly. "You have nothing to accuse me of. I can't force my daughter's inclinations. If you are really so much attached to Dina, surely you would not wish her to marry you against her will."

"She is a child and knows nothing of her own heart," returned the lawyer. "I would have lavished my fortune on her, and treated her like a queen; she should have been the first lady in Hatherston. And you actually sacrifice such splendid prospects because a romantic girl fancies twelve years too much difference in our ages!"

"We are the chief sufferers," replied the farmer, "for now, of course, you will foreclose."

"Foreclose! I should rather think so. In six months' time you turn out of the Uplands, and every stick and stone there becomes mine. You will have the formal notice from my agent to-day. If Miss Barton should change her mind, remember I am still willing to marry her."

"I do not think there is any chance of that."

"Where is she? I understand you have sent her away."

"She has taken a situation as companion to a lady. I have thought it best that neither my wife nor myself should have her address. Mrs. Barton is much attached to her home, and she might be tempted to appeal to Dina's generosity."

And Geraldine on that very day was speeding through the fair Midland shires on her way to Monkton, the nearest town to Dene, a pretty village five miles beyond the track of the great iron horses. Dressed as she had never been before, with Trix's loving farewell, and Miss Lily's kind good wishes ringing in her ears, the girl would have been quite happy but for the thought of what might be going on at home.

She was not afraid of strangers. Though she had spent all her life at Hatherston, and never been in "society," Dina had an innate grace and dignity of her own; there was nothing awkward or constrained about the farmer's daughter.

There was no one to meet her at Monkton Station, which gave her a little shrob of disappointment, until she remembered that Mrs. Trafford had spoken of herself as "poor," and so probably did not keep a carriage.

She was speaking to the station master as to the chance of hiring a fly when a pretty phaeton drove up, and a lady, with sufficient resemblance to Mrs. Lily for Dina to guess her identity, alighted.

"I am so sorry," said Amy Dore, penitently. "I promised Mrs. Trafford to meet you. Miss Barton, and someone came in just as I



was starting; so, though we hurried, I am late after all!"

Another five minutes, and they were driving towards Dene. The groom remained to see after the luggage, and so there was no one to overhear their conversation.

"I think you will like Mrs. Trafford," said the pretty young maiden; "she is very kind and gentle, but she always seems to have a cloud hanging over her. Alan is quite different, he is all spirits and gaiety."

"Perhaps, Mrs. Trafford has not got over her husband's death?"

"Oh! I don't think that's it! She had one daughter, a very pretty girl, who died on the eve of her wedding-day. It is strange; she was engaged to her cousin, Lord Trafford's eldest son. I told Mrs. Trafford the other day it seemed fatal one of her children should reign at Dene, for, of course, everything will be Alan's now."

"Was it long ago?" asked Dina, with great interest in the fate of the bride.

"Not very—five years, perhaps. John Trafford was devoted to Isabel. It was he who insisted on her mother being given the use of the White House. Whenever he came down to Dene, he stayed with her, and, strange enough, it was at her house he died. He was at Dene shooting, and one of the visitors, not very skilful with his gun, fired so rashly that the bullet entered Mr. Trafford's side. He lived a few hours, but died before his parents could reach him. It is very sad for Lord and Lady Trafford. He was the last of their three children, and the only one who lived to be thirty. They hardly ever come to Dene now, and I am sure it is not to be wondered at."

The White House was a pretty two-storied dwelling, with a verandah running all round it. It had once been the abode of Lord Trafford's agent; but the present holder of that post was a man of large private means and enjoyed a lease of the Dover House until such time as Lady Trafford should be a widow.

The White House was quite unpretentious, and easily kept up by two maids, and a boy to divide his time between errands and the garden.

"I have seen Mrs. Trafford already to-day, so I will not come in," said Amy Dore, pleasantly. Then, in a graver tone, she added, "My dear, I do hope you will be happy here!"

The next parlour maid showed Miss Barton to the drawing room, and Dina's heart seemed to go out with a rush to the sweet-faced woman sitting there.

"I am very pleased to see you," said Mrs. Trafford, gently. "My dear, how young you look! I wonder your parents could part with you."

Dina smiled.

"There are ten of us," she said, cheerfully, "and I am the eldest, so I am very glad to be able to do something."

A very cosy bedroom had been prepared for the companion. Mrs. Trafford treated her as a welcome guest, and when soon after ten Dina retired to rest, she decided her lot had fallen in a pleasant place; only she noticed the shadow Mrs. Dore had mentioned.

It was impossible to spend an evening with Mrs. Trafford without discovering she was possessed by a feverish restlessness, a kind of nervous anxiety which she could not shake off.

It was not sorrow for the dead or anxiety for her living child; though a woman who had seen her daughter killed by a fall from her horse on the very eve of her wedding-day, and not long after had had her destined son-in-law carried into her house to die from a gunshot wound, might easily have been pardoned if she had fumed and fidgeted over Alan; but Mrs. Trafford seemed to take it for granted everything was right with her boy, and rather to resent his following his profession than to mourn over his enforced separation from herself. Her trouble, whatever it was, was not grief for his absence.

"I will take you over the Castle some day, Miss Barton," she told Dina, a week after the girl's arrival. "Dene is one of the finest seats in England, well worth seeing. I don't often go there, for I can never forget that my child was to have been its mistress."

"I have been told about her death, it was terribly sad!"

"It just broke John Trafford's heart. I don't believe he ever held up his head again. My cousin, Lord Trafford, has suffered sorely. I cannot do less than spare him Alan. If only the boy understood his duty he would give up his profession and marry. What need has the heir of Dene to earn his bread?"

"Is Dene Castle shut up?"

"No. It is a whim of Lady Trafford's that it should always be kept ready for her in case she should come down unexpectedly. She never comes, it is just an idle fancy; but then, rich people can afford such whims."

The widow spoke rather bitterly, and Dina guessed there was little love lost between her and the mistress of Dene; the childless wife and the mother of the heir would be antagonistic naturally.

Mr. Trafford came down to the White House when the little companion had been there a month.

Dina came in for a walk one afternoon, when Mrs. Dore had carried off her employer for a drive, to find a stranger sitting on the verandah with a newspaper.

"I must introduce myself, it seems, Miss Barton. I am Alan Trafford, and I am very pleased to have this chance of thanking you for your kind attention to my mother."

Dina had condemned this young man as worldly, undutiful, and conceited; but now that she saw him she judged herself, and she confessed Alan Trafford had a noble-looking face, and that he spoke of his mother with real affection.

"I am afraid she will never recover her spirits," he told Dina, frankly. "First my sister's death, and then poor John's. Both, one may say, violent and unexpected. It is no wonder the shock was too much for her."

"And she seems to have been devoted to them both."

Alan sighed.

"She worshipped Isabel, but poor John—well, it seems cruel to speak harshly of the dead, but I never can understand anyone's caring much for him. Why, when I heard of my sister's fate I felt death had been merciful in saving her being tied to a tyrant. His own father and mother confess they never understood John. I always fancy he only took such interest in my mother to annoy Lady Trafford by showing her he could be a dutiful and affectionate relation if he liked. He was a model character in some ways. He never got into debt or difficulties. He was as steady as time; but then he was as proud as Lucifer, and had a will of iron. But my mother thought him perfect. She has never been the same since John's death."

Mrs. Trafford found the two young people late in the day, and did not seem best pleased.

"Really, Alan," she said to her son, when she had sent Dina indoors on an errand, "you should remember your position. What would Lord Trafford say if he caught his heir in familiar conversation with my paid companion?"

"If Miss Barton is refined enough to live with you, surely she is grand enough for me to talk to," he answered, impatiently. "As to Lord Trafford, I am not his slave; besides, he knows a lady when he sees one, and with all his faults he is not prone to pride."

"Repeat goes he hates the very thought of a scandal. If he cast off his own daughter because she married without his sanction, he will not be more indulgent to you."

"My dear mother," said Alan, wearily, "I have not the least desire to marry anyone, so you need not trouble about Lord Trafford's views; and there is one thing you forget, both the title and estates are strictly entailed. Heaven knows I don't count on dead men's

shoes, but if it comes to facts, why, unless Lady Trafford dies and her husband marries again and has children of his own, I must be heir of Dene even if he hated me."

"And yet you keep on working."

"Because I can't bear being idle, and I don't want to be a dependent on my cousin. Lord Trafford may live another twenty years. I don't want to be a pensioner on his bounty all that time."

"You never consider your mother," said Mrs. Trafford, tartly. "If you married an heiress your position would be established."

He sighed. This was what always awaited him on a visit to the White House. Was it strange he disliked coming there?

"Don't let's talk of matrimony, mother. Where did you find your present companion? She reminds me of someone, though I can't think who."

"Miss Barton was recommended to me by the Vicar's wife. She is a protégée of her mother, and I think she is fairly satisfactory."

The visit to Dene Castle had never gone off, and Mrs. Trafford, who was much more amiable the next day, finding that Alan had to meet the steward there on business for Lord Trafford, suggested he should drive herself and Miss Barton over, and they could in-post the house and grounds while he was busy.

Alan agreed at once. It was a perfect August day, and though they started directly after lunch a soft wind was blowing, so that the heat was not at all oppressive.

Alan was received by the old housekeeper with every mark of respect. She pressed tea and cakes on Mrs. Trafford and Dina, finally taking her key-bag and preparing herself to act as their cicerone round the picture gallery and other lions of the place.

"She's a sweet face," said the old housekeeper, as Dina stood lost in admiration before a picture, "and she favours the family rarely. May I ask what relation she is to you, madam?"

Mrs. Trafford stared. She had not mentioned Miss Barton's name, nor that she was her hired companion. She herself had remarked no likeness to the Traffords. What in the world did Mrs. Hicks mean?

"She is no relation," replied the lady, a trifle shortly. "She is staying with me for a little time, but I can't believe she is like the Traffords."

"Ah, you haven't seen many of the family, madam. There was Mrs. Grey, my master's sister, and"—she lowered her voice—"poor Miss Mona. This young lady is rarely like them both."

"I have never seen a picture of Miss Mona. I suppose there is one here?"

"Surely, madam! If you will come and look at it you will understand why I look your friend for one of the family."

Mrs. Trafford owned the resemblance when she stood by Mona Trafford's likeness. It seemed to her the portrait of her companion, only gay and brighter than Dina.

"Yes," she said, frankly, "it is a wonderful resemblance; but I know my young friend is not even the most distant relation to us. It only proves what strange things chance likenesses are."

"It does, madam! Poor Miss Mona! It's nineteen years and more since she went away. The old place has never seemed itself since."

"She died within the year, I think I have heard."

"Yes, soon after the baby's birth. It followed her pretty soon, poor lamb, and they were buried in the same grave. It's sad to think my master had but one grandchild, and her he never saw."

"I never heard any particulars of Miss Mona's marriage. I suppose it was a scandal?"

"The husband was a gentleman farmer, madam. I can't recall his name now; he lived the other side of England, and farmed his own land. He met Miss Mona when she was staying with her aunt. They eloped because

the master had refused his consent to the engagement, so none of us here ever saw the gentleman. Mr. Gerald was drowned on his homeward voyage not so long after, and Mr. Trafford was angrier if possible than his parents. The family were in mourning for Mr. Gerald when Miss Mona died, or I doubt they'd not have put it on for her."

"And the child was a girl."

"Yes, poor lamb, and she died with her mother. When Mr. John went I heard the master speak of Miss Mona for the first time in all these years. 'Oh, Hicks,' he said, 'if my daughter had lived, or her little child, I shouldn't feel so desolate.' Though to be sure, ma'am, he do love Mr. Alan almost like a son of his own."

But Mrs. Trafford seemed strangely interested in Mona's married life.

"You never heard where she lived, poor girl, I suppose? I hope not near enough for her to meet her parents and be ignored by them."

"Oh, no, ma'am. Miss Mona's husband lived the right side of England near a place called Hatherton. I believe the vicar's lady comes from there, and it's often been in my mind to ask her if ever she'd seen Miss Mona's grave; but there, Mrs. Dore's, so to say, a new comer, and I don't like to talk of the family to strangers, so I've just held my tongue."

## CHAPTER V., AND LAST.

"MOTHER, the expedition has been too much for you," said Alan kindly, as they started to drive home, and he noticed Mrs. Trafford's white face; "you are looking tired to death."

"I am all right, Alan, only Dene Castle always makes me sad."

"It is very very beautiful," said Dina; "but it seems sad to see it so deserted."

"It used to be the gayest house in the county, before Lord Trafford lost his daughter," said Alan. "I wish I could persuade him to come home and settle down; there is something touching in the way he clings to London."

"Have you ever been to London, Dina?" asked Mrs. Trafford, graciously.

"Only for three or four days just before I came here."

"Is your name spelt with an 'h,' Miss Barton?" asked Alan. "Do you know, I never heard it pronounced so before. I have heard of Dina's who sounded their names in the Italian way, as though spelt with an 'e,' but never of a real genuine English Dina."

"My name is not Dina really, Mr. Trafford. I was christened Geraldine, only mother thought it too long and grand for everyday use. I have heard my old nurse say I once had an uncle Gerald, but he is dead long ago. I suppose I was christened after him."

"Of course," reflected Mrs. Trafford, "the twins Mona and Gerald had been devoted to each other. This girl's resemblance to the picture in the gallery at Dene was no chance likeness! She was Mona's child—by every law of Heaven and man, Lord Trafford's heiress!"

Mrs. Trafford lay back with closed eyes. Two years ago she had signed, and the fear of discovery had haunted her ever since. Again and again she had been tempted to confess everything, and then love for her son had kept her silent. Her crime, after all, was a negative one; she had uttered no lie, made no false statement: she had simply kept silence.

When John Trafford lay dying, when he knew his hours were numbered, his conscience reproached him with a cruel fraud; and he confessed it to Mrs. Trafford, begging her to repeat his dying words to his parents.

It was he who hardened their hearts against poor Mona long ago; he who had returned her letter to their dead brother, torn down the middle; he, finally, who suppressed James Barton's letter announcing his wife's death and substituted another, penned by himself in a feigned hand, saying that Mona and her

baby girl had died within a few days of each other and were buried in one grave. And his object!

Money! wretched, miserable money! The heir of an ancient title and fine estate, he could not bear that his mother's fortune should go to a child who had, he argued, no claim on it compared with himself.

Lady Trafford brought her husband fifty thousand pounds, which was settled to go at her death in equal shares to her younger children or their representatives; only if not one of these lived would the money go with the title.

John poured out his confession to Mrs. Trafford, to the mother of the only creature he had ever loved, forgetting that in all the world she was the person, save one, it would most affect.

If Geraldine Barton lived, not only would she take her grandmother's fifty thousand pounds, but Dene Castle and every penny of its revenues. Alan Trafford would inherit only an empty title.

John left a packet of papers, which he told Mrs. Trafford would explain everything. She never opened them or she would have known her son's rival was named Barton, and have guessed the identity of Mrs. Lily's protégée with the girl she already hated.

She was not quite bad enough to destroy the proofs John's dying hand had given her, but she locked them away in a desk, and held her tongue.

That night, when everyone had gone to bed, Mrs. Trafford unlocked the desk, and took out the little packet.

Its contents were few. Only the letter James Barton had sent with the certificate of his wife's death. It contained but one mention of his little girl: "The baby is strong and likely to live. She was christened Geraldine at her mother's wish." A brief confession of John Trafford's fraud and its object, finally a wild prayer that his parents would right the wrong and cherish Mona's child. That was all.

How wonderful it seemed to Mrs. Trafford the fraud had been so successful. Both the peer and his wife knew Mona's married name, and the place where her husband lived. One visit to her grave, and they would have discovered the deception.

Any of the people at Hatherton who remembered the parentage of James Barton's first wife could have proved her daughter's claims, and all these years the secret had been kept. The heiress of Dene had been brought up in a farm-house, and grudging her share of the limited family income.

But, if the truth were told, Alan must suffer. He would have to go back to depending entirely on his own exertions. He would some day be a penniless peer. Oh! why had things not been managed better? Why had he not married an heiress?

But apparently some solution of her difficulties occurred to Mrs. Trafford; for presently she put the papers away, and prepared for bed with a smile that was positively cheerful.

"That would put everything straight," she said with a sigh, "and would be the best thing that could happen. I shall say a word to Alan, he is so obstinate, but I shall keep him here as long as possible."

Lord and Lady Trafford were surprised at the long time their heir lingered at Dene. Generally a week at the White House was as long as Alan cared to stay; but now he had been gone a month, and even yet made no mention of his return.

Mrs. Trafford held her tongue and looked on well satisfied. She said not a word to Dina or Alan, and watched them drifting every day farther and farther into Cupid's snares, until she began to think the dénouement was remarkably long in coming.

And it came at last through an accident. Dina had received a letter from home, forwarded by Mrs. Lily, which told her of Wilfred Lomax's cruel revenge.

In January he would claim the Uplands,

the house, stock, furniture, in fact all James Barton called his own. Her father at forty-five would have to go out into the world and begin life's battle afresh, and—ah! this was the sting of it—it was her fault.

"Miss Barton—Dina! what is the matter?"

Alan Trafford had come in unperceived in time to see the tears on her face.

"I thought everyone was out."

"I left the mother at the Vicarage, and came back to look for you. I shan't go away till you have told me your trouble."

"I can't."

"You must," he said, tenderly. "Who knows? I might be able to help you."

"No one can do that."

"My dear child," said Alan, in his masterful way, "you can't be sure of that. There is no trouble in the world, Dina, hopeless, except sickness or death."

"It is not that."

"You have had news from home?"

"My father is ruined, and it is my fault!"

"I can't believe that," said Alan, gently. "Do you know, Miss Barton, I always fancied you had no father, but were the prop of a widowed mother. Now please tell me what is the matter?"

"It is some money he borrowed five years ago, and the mortgage has called it in. If it is not paid by the first of January the farm will go!"

"Four months," said Alan, cheerfully. "Surely something can be done. Who is the creditor?"

"A Mr. Lomax."

"Not Wilfred Lomax?"

"Yes. Do you know him?"

"I ought to, seeing he was my cousin's agent for years. He made a fortune, honestly I believe, though by rather sharp practice, and retired."

"That must be the same. Our Mr. Lomax was a lawyer."

"And he is proving himself a relentless creditor. How much is the debt?"

"Four thousand five hundred pounds interest and principal."

"Well, Miss Barton, Lord Trafford has done a good deal for Lomax, and I will get him to use his influence, and try for favourable terms."

"I am sure Mr. Lomax won't relent; he said he would be revenged on me."

A light broke on Alan.

"Do you mean Lomax presumed to propose to you?"

Her head was bowed on her hands, but no answer was needed.

"And so they actually wanted to sell you to obtain their freedom! A nice set of relations you must have. Now, Dina, I will settle with this Lomax. I expect he has done his best to cheat Mr. Barton, but I understand him."

"It is very kind of you, but—"

"But what?"

"I have no claim on you, and—"

Alan looked into her eyes.

"Sweetheart, you have the strongest claim on me possible, you are the only woman I have ever loved. Geraldine, I won't drive a bargain with you like Wilfred Lomax; however you decide, my best help is yours; but, oh! my darling, I love you so. If you could learn to care for me I should be the happiest of men!"

"I mustn't," she said, simply. "You are rich and great, while I am only a farmer's daughter. Mrs. Trafford would be frantic."

"I don't care if the whole world is frantic, Dina, provided I have your promise."

"You don't understand. My father is a working farmer, my stepmother sees to the dairy and I help her. We are not what people call gentry."

"You are a lady," said Alan, firmly. "A duchess can be no more, and, Dina, for years I was a poor man with no prospects of wealth, and I would give up all chance of riches and



go back to poverty, oh! so cheerfully, if it was the only means of winning you."

When Mrs. Trafford came in she found her companion had vanished, and Alan was pacing up and down the verandah with a new joy on his face.

"You will be awfully put out, mother, but I am going to be married."

"I am very glad to hear it."

"But she isn't an heiress. Oh, mother, do put away your ambitious views and sympathies with us. I have loved Geraldine Barton ever since I first saw her, and she has promised to be my wife."

Mrs. Trafford took the news a great deal better than he expected.

"I was always fond of Dina," she remarked, amiably. "But what in the world will Lord Trafford say? You ought to tell him at once."

"I shall go up to London to-morrow. Mother, you will be kind to Dina? She has no mother of her own, and I don't fancy she has received much affection from her father's wife."

"You may trust me, Alan."

Mrs. Trafford slept that night as she had not done for years. The wrong would be righted without Alan's suffering any loss, and really the boy might have searched the world through without finding a sweeter wife than Geraldine.

Alone together in the library of the town mansion near Hyde-park, Alan told Lord Trafford very simply of his engagement.

"She is the most perfect lady you ever met," he told his cousin, "but I fear you will be disappointed. Dina has not a penny of fortune. Her father is a farmer, and I met her while she was living at the White House as my mother's companion."

"My boy," said Lord Trafford, sadly, "years ago when my daughter died I took a solemn oath that I would never interfere again in the marriage of any member of my family; but, Alan, it is a sad mistake—you might have chosen anyone."

"I should never care for anyone else, and, indeed, you will learn to love her. She is only eighteen, and she has spent her whole life in a country village, but she is as graceful as any highborn beauty."

Lord Trafford smiled.

"What does your mother say?"

"That I shall have the sweetest wife in Blankshire."

"Dear me! I should have thought she would have been furious. And what is your fiancée's name?"

"Geraldine Barton."

"What!" and Lord Trafford almost screamed. "Geraldine Barton, and eighteen! You've been imposed on, Alan."

"What do you mean?" asked Alan, bewildered. "Miss Barton was eighteen last April, and she was christened Geraldine. Her father is James Barton, of the Uplands Farm, Hatherton, the Bartons have farmed their own lands for generations, though just now they have fallen on evil days."

"Listen to me, Alan. Nineteen years ago this very summer my daughter Mona married James Barton. They had one child Geraldine, born in the spring of the following year, and who died a few weeks later and was buried with her mother."

Alan stared.

"There must be some mistake."

"Not on my side. Barton wrote to tell me of his double loss. This girl may be the daughter of his second marriage, but in that case she could not be eighteen."

"Dina's mother died when she was a baby. She was christened Geraldine at her mother's wish, because Gerald was the name of Mrs. Barton's twin brother. It struck me when I first saw Dina she reminded me of someone. I find my mother noticed it too; she says Geraldine is the image of one of the pictures at Dene Castle."

"This must be inquired into," said Lord

Trafford, gravely. "It looks as though this girl were my grandchild!"

"But who would deceive you? Her father could have no motive in persuading you she was dead."

The next morning's post brought Lord Trafford a registered letter. It had been handed in at the Charing-cross office the evening before. There was no clue to the sender. It contained the papers Mrs. Trafford had kept so long hidden away, for the widow had taken a trip to London for the purpose of posting them, since for them to arrive with the Dene postmark would have betrayed her secret. So it was proved now beyond a doubt Geraldine Barton was Lord Trafford's grandchild and heiress. Alan had proposed to the only woman who could bring him Dene as her dower.

"I never suspected it," he cried. "I assure you I never dreamed Dina was related to you."

"My boy," said the peer, warmly, "I know it. In fact, I have a suspicion you would never have proposed to her had you guessed the truth. Nothing could have pleased me more. Mona's child will be mistress of my old home, and I shall not have to see you disinherited."

"And Wilfred Lomax must have known the truth all the while," said Alan, who had told his cousin of the lawyer's worry.

"I expect so," Lord Trafford did not add that he believed Alan's mother had known it too. He could afford to forgive her since all had ended so happily.

Lord Trafford was a rich man, and he did not do things by halves. He went down to the Uplands and saw James Barton. He told him of Dina's engagement, and offered, for the sake of his dead Mona, to give ten thousand pounds to clear the farm from its incumbrances and help the Bartons to start afresh.

That the offer was gratefully accepted needs no telling; also that Wilfred Lomax deserted the Grange and was seen no more at Hatherton. Lord Trafford called at the Rectory, and thanked Mr. and Mrs. Lily, with tears in his eyes, for their kindness to Mona's child. He invited the Rector to come and perform the ceremony which was to take place in December, because he thought her mother's friend the fittest person to give Geraldine to her husband.

The news reached Beatrice Tindal very soon after her arrival in Bombay, and she sent the bride a letter full of very loving congratulations, and which, like most young ladies' letters, contained an important postscript:—

"I'm sure Mr. Trafford ought to be very grateful to me; for if it hadn't been for your promise to me, you would have accepted THAT HORRID MR. LOMAX."

[THE END.]

## PRETTY PENELOPE.

### CHAPTER VII.

AUGUST died out in a splendour of heat and sunshine, and September kept up the prestige of the dead month. The bad weather against which Penelope had inveighed so strongly, had hardly once returned during the month that stretched between the day of Denis Latimar's departure, and this afternoon on which Penelope was to be found sitting on the farthest and of the rocks away out from the shore, a book opened on her lap, her sailor hat tilted over her eyes, and her feet planted recklessly in a little pool of water.

This was her favourite seat when the tide was out, and she had established a code of signals with Lucie, by means of pocket-handkerchiefs, whereby she could be summoned in case she was needed.

She was looking paler than she had been,

and there was a subdued thoughtful look on her face that made it quite a different one to the saucy Penelope of formerly. She was thinking, thinking of herself and her future. She was always thinking now. She had one hungry yearning desire, one wish so great it seemed to overwhelm all else in her mind. It was the wish to leave Stevenstone, to put miles and miles between herself and the Grey-stone walls that held the grounds and buildings of Denis Latimar's home.

The wish had become more and more intense of late. It seemed to govern the very beating of her heart, and it was so difficult to realise, so very very difficult. Above and beyond everything there was her mother. How could she even venture to suggest that the home should be planted somewhere else? It would be little less than cruelty to tear away her mother from a spot which was endeared to her by a lifetime of joys and sorrows, of happy days as well as sad ones. And then, if even Penelope could have braced herself to this, there were other and more practical reasons. The little cottage cost almost a nominal sum per annum—with a hot flush of mortification, Penelope felt assured that Denis would no longer allow it to cost that much in future—and, as Lucie had put it before her in that one important interview they had had, they were so very poor.

Penelope was not quite sure what amount the income was upon which they had to live; she knew, however, that, save for the small annuity accruing from the sum of money bequeathed to her by Madam Latimar, her mother was independent of any assistance from her own family, which was at least one source of pleasure.

"To be beholden to Denis Latimar for any thing is bad enough," the girl often mused in the hot intolerance of youthful pride, "but to take charity from Aunt Julia—oh! that would be horrible!"

The question, then, of suggesting a move from Stevenstone and the neighbourhood of Latimar court, was little less than an impossibility. There remained only one other way of escape which was hardly difficult, and that was for Penelope to make her home for a time at Laburnum Cottage, and the big house that stood guard over it.

This thought was in Penelope's heart now, as she sat gazing over the sea that lapped the base of the rocks with a murmuring sound, and stretched out in a burnished line far beyond where her sight could follow.

It would be a sacrifice and a struggle as well as a relief, could this thought be realised, for Penelope clung to her delicate fragile mother, whose wan beauty seemed to grow more and more wan every day.

She knew without words that she gave her mother a joy and a comfort that not all Lucie's gentleness conveyed. Besides, Lucie naturally had to share her love, whereas—at least so the mother's heart thought—Penelope was all for her: her baby, her dear sweet little love, her sunshine and her joy.

Mrs. Deeborough had resigned herself to Penelope's stay in London because she thought it for the girl's future good. But Penelope had seen how great a cost that resignation had been. She felt a weary sort of anger come over her as she sat trying to frame some sort of possible life out of the vague pictures of the future that rose up before her.

Why should fate have thrown her so closely in Denis Latimar's path, and why should Marcia Rochdale have taken upon herself to exercise so wantonly, so unnecessary an insult in connection with this man?

"If Marcia had said nothing, things might have been very different," the girl said to herself, dreamily. "I should never have thought twice about him, very likely we might not have met. Life is just that sort of tangle: simply because I did not desire him to come into my path, he comes, of course intimately. Had I not had his history, his character, his

nature, his doings and his non-doings cramped down his throat, he would have been to me what he is to mother and Lucie—a friend and a nice friend too, but as it is—"

Penelope finished with a shrug of her shoulders and bit her lip. Circumstances had certainly raised up a very uncomfortable and unhappy burden to rest on her young shoulders. There was scarcely an hour in the day when Penelope's face did not flush hotly, and a sort of contracting pain seize on her heart as she remembered Denis's scorn of her and recalled all the follies she had done to produce that scorn.

There was no pleasure, no pride in remembering the power she had held, in realising that his love, his best and purest love, had been just within her touch, and lightly thrown away. No, there was no pride, there was but sorrow and bitterness, and something very like deep regret.

Now that the time had gone, that her brain had time to sort itself, Penelope was not sure that she had not done a very wrong thing in acting as she had done.

She was torn with doubt and fear as to his future. She dreaded less her words and deeds might have led him to do some reckless thing that would mar his whole life; and she was far more distressed at the thought of any possible harm coming to him than she was at the absolute knowledge of her own wretched happiness. She had the courage of a lion, and she did not shrink from the result of her girlish pride and reckless independence; but she was courageous more for herself than others, and, though she knew so little of Denis, she thought that and come over him now last evening he had been with them, the rough, wild, angry words he had spoken, had even then sent a thrill of fear through her as to what might come to him from his acute disappointment.

"Men cannot bear pain, it is not their portion," she thought, in the same dreamy way, resting her chin in her hand. "We women can endure silently, stolidly, like this rock; but a man is different—he must have a vent, he must have action." And then came a thought that was often present before her: "But did he after all care for me so deeply, so really? Was it only a passing fancy, just a whim? If—if I were to see him again, I might know better; I might be more at rest. Oh! Denis, Denis, if I could see you again, if I could only let you know the truth, my love—my love!"

She felt, even while she doubted in this unsettled way, that there was no need for doubts, that Denis Latimer had indeed loved her, would have offered the best, the purest, the highest feelings of his heart for her acceptance, had she not shown him so plainly she was not worthy so much as a passing thought. Would his bitter disappointments harm the frank nobility of his nature? Would it change his generous gentleness, his broad mind, his unworldliness?

Penelope shivered as she wondered this. It would be a terrible thing if such a work came from her hands. She could only hope such would not be the case, that, and even while she thought this she winced, Denis's love for her might be only an ephemeral thing forgotten as swiftly as it had been born.

"The thought of the winter months spent there close to him, perhaps seeing him often, meeting him day by day, is almost more than I can bear. I shall feel his eyes burn me with contempt, and—I would rather he struck me than look at me again as he did that night." Penelope bit her lip that had grown white as she said this to herself. "Oh! what shall I do? I must go away for a little while, only a little while. I must arrange it so that I go when he arrives at the Court; but where am I to go? Aunt Julia will not invite me again, even if I could bear to do that. I must write to Uncle Desborough. He does not know much about me; but I believe he would not refuse me if I asked him point-blank to give me hospitality for a little while. Lucie will not think me

unkind in going away so soon, and I know she wants to be with mamma as much as she can before she marries. It is my only chance, my only way. If—if Denis were not to come to the Court this autumn,"—she rose to her feet, gathering up her book and umbrella, a sort of relief and a pang of regret shot through her at the same time; "if he should not come," she said, with bitter self-reproach, "it will be my doing. I shall be keeping him away from his home and his duties. He ought to hate me; perhaps he does by now, if a man can ever hate anything he holds in such contempt as Denis Latimer holds me."

She picked her way slowly over the rocks covered with sea-weed and green sea-grasses. It was a slippery pathway and required some skill; but Penelope poised herself lightly on the broken, in some cases sharp-edged rocks, as easily as a bird. On the sands, evidently coming in search of her, she saw Lucie; and as she drew nearer, Penelope at once knew that something had happened, something of a most exciting nature to produce such a flush of colour to Lucie's usually colourless cheeks and to give brilliancy to her light blue eyes. Seen thus, Lucie Desborough had a much stronger resemblance to her young and lovely sister than one would have imagined.

"What is it?" cried Penelope, as she poised herself on the final rock and prepared to leap to the sands below. What has happened, Lucie? "Your face is burning! Is it anything new, or have you swallowed a cherry-stone?"

This last in allusion to an old and bygone moment when Lucie had been in danger of choking when eating a cherry.

For once Lucie was not indulgent to her sister's wit.

"You are always so flippant, Pen," she answered, almost fiercely, "and—and you spoil things so." There was a little wistful break in the speaker's voice at the last words.

It was evident that Miss Desborough was in a state of excitement bordering on agitation. In an instant, Penelope changed her tone.

"Darling," she said, softly, slipping her hand through Lucie's arm, "do forgive me. I did not mean to vex you. What is it, Lucie? You have something to tell me?"

"Oh, Pen! guess—guess. What do you think has happened?"

Lucie was almost trembling. Penelope surveyed her sister gravely and tenderly. It was good to see someone quivering with happiness, though she herself could never experience such a feeling now; and it was happiness—no need for words to give that explanation.

"You know I am the worst guesser in the world," she said, hurriedly.

Lucie stood in front of her impressively.

"Walter's cousin, Mrs. Birch, is dead: she has left him all her money. He will have nearly two thousand a year. We—we can be married at once; and think, Pen! think what we can do for mother!"

Penelope looked an instant at her sister's happy face. She may be forgiven, perhaps, the thought that crossed her mind at this moment—the thought that fate in giving her sister such golden sunshine was dealing her another blow, was pushing her farther on the path she longed so eagerly to turn from and to forget, if possible.

It might be selfish of the girl, but it was natural, and, coming as it did on the top of her deep and long-pondering on her future, was doubly natural. Her selfishness was not long-lived, however. Leaning forward, she kissed the flushed excited face before her.

"Dear darling Lucie. I am so glad at last you are going to make that poor Walter of yours happy. What wonderful news! It sounds like a fairy story. Have you told mother? but of course you have, and isn't she delighted?"

Lucie's eyes filled with tears. "Oh! Pen," she said, "our mother is an angel, she lives only for us. If I had to leave her alone, I should never marry unless she

would consent to share our home, but now she has you. She has such joy, such delight in you, my little sister. When I think of all this, I feel as though this happiness were not real; it seems too great to be true."

"I am sure it is a good verification of the proverb, 'Tout vient à ceux qui s'attendent.' You have waited a long time for this, dear Lucie."

They were pacing homewards now over the sunlit sand. Mrs. Desborough, sitting beside the open window, saw them coming, and waved her handkerchief to them.

"Is Walter here?" Penelope asked, as they walked on, Lucie talking excitedly.

"No, he has written—the afternoon post has just come—here is his letter. Mother had one from Aunt Julia, and one from Mr. DeBurg, I fancy, but I really am too excited to remember. I ran out to find you so hurriedly, I longed to let you know."

And then Lucie drifted on to the question of her marriage. Her face was dyed a soft-rose as she talked.

"Walter says he wants the wedding to be immediately—immediately, Pen; what can he mean by that?"

"Now—at once—directly—post-haste, without delay!" said Penelope, with the smile that lit up her face but did not linger now as it used to do, "that is the true meaning of the word in the dictionary, Lucie, I hope you will write and let Aunt Julia know of your good fortune as soon as possible."

"We shall see what she has written. No doubt mother will want me to answer the letter sometime soon."

Mrs. Rochdale's letter, however, had not even been opened, Mrs. Desborough had been in an equal state of delight and excitement with her daughter over the unexpected good news; her correspondence had been forgotten for the moment.

The delay in reading the letters was, however, soon remedied when her two children joined her.

Penelope was standing in the window where she and Denis had exchanged that last never-to-be-forgotten conversation, when her mother's voice, full of astonishment, broke in on the dreamy heaviness of her thoughts.

"Just fancy! your aunt is on board Denis Latimer's yacht—she and Marcia. They have been with him nearly a month. Why, they must have joined him immediately he left us. She says they have had a delightful time, only short cruises about the coast, and their headquarters have been at Southampton. She alludes to their mourning." Mrs. Desborough said, looking up from the letter, "and the paper is black-edged, so someone in Mr. Rochdale's family must be dead. I wonder Julia did not tell me of this before."

"You forget, mamma, you are really not of very great importance," Penelope spoke drily, with a touch of bitterness in her voice.

Mrs. Desborough only laughed; she took the speech as one of Pen's loving impertinence, and the bitterness escaped her. Lucie had flitted out of the room for a moment, and had not heard what her sister said. She came back in time to learn from the end of Mrs. Rochdale's letter that Latimer Court was to be opened in October, and a large house-party, among which the widow and her daughter were to be found, was going to be entertained by Denis Latimer.

"Why, we shall be quite gay," Mrs. Desborough said, her pretty face looking almost young with the glow of pleasure and animation this news had awakened. "I will recall something of the old days. Ah! I am glad Denis is going to do this. He promised me he would come back to his home as soon as he could; but I did not think it would be so soon. Pen, my darling, this will make a great difference for you. You will have some of the enjoyment and gaiety you ought to have. I shall let Denis know how glad I am when I write. I wonder he has not sent me this news himself. I have not had a letter



from him since that one he wrote just after he left us."

"If he has been yachting, that will account for his silence," Lucie said, with that gentle tact and sympathy that always made her try and smooth things.

Penelope, playing with the tassel of the blind, looked over her shoulder.

"And what does your favourite the Rector say, Mummy darling?" she asked, strangling a yawn, and appearing overcome with sleep.

Mrs. Desborough hastily opened Mr. De Barch's letter.

"It is a confirmation of your Aunt Julia's news," she answered. "Ordess have been sent to the Court, and already work-people are in the house, and the whole place looks wide awake. Mr. De Barch is so pleased!"

"In fact," Penelope observed, as she left her window—"in fact, there is general rejoicing, and Stevenstone will be out of its senses with delight. Mummy, I am going to lie down. I can't keep my eyes open, and unless I give way to an hour of sloth I shall be absolutely incapable of giving a definite opinion on the subject of Lucie's trousseau. Supposing I said I would have a bridesmaid's dress of yellow when I meant green! The thought is too horrible!"

"Come and give me a kiss, my baby," the mother said, tenderly, as she watched the graceful little form moving slowly away. Penelope returned instantly and pressed her lips to her mother's, then with a prodigious yawn sauntered through the doorway.

Mrs. Desborough sat for an instant looking after her, then turned to her daughter.

"Lucie," she said, tremulously, "I—I hope Pen is well. She looked pale just now, did you not think so? and her lips, when she kissed me, were quite cold. If—"

"Dearest mother," Lucie hastened to say, "there is nothing wrong, she is only sleepy. She sits out there on those rocks, till she gets stiff and tired. I will go and see after her if you like."

"No, leave her. It was only my fancy, very likely; let her rest. If she thinks I am anxious she will come back again, and the hour's sleep will do her good."

And then the mother's heart turned to the happiness that had come to her other child, and the two who had been together so much and so closely sat and discussed the future; while Penelope, safe within her bedroom, with locked door, walked so and fro in the restless misery that filled her heart. If she suffered now at the bare mention of what lay before her in the time close at hand, what would she not suffer when that time was actually come!

It seemed to her she would not be able to go through with the task that lay before her.

## CHAPTER VIII.

LUCIE'S good fortune raised her considerably in the eyes of her worldly relatives. Mrs. Rochdale wrote a most warm letter of congratulation, and declared the pleasure it would give Martin and herself to be present at the wedding, which was fixed for the second week in October.

"We shall then be settled for our visit at Latimer Court, and most conveniently so, my dear Lucie, under the circumstances," Mrs. Rochdale wrote. "Your uncle regrets he will not be able to be present, but he writes with me in much love and hearty good wishes, and hopes you will like the little trifle he has sent you as a remembrance on such an auspicious occasion." The trifle alluded to consisted of a very massive clock, which had quite a baronial air. "The bracelet you will receive is from Maria, and I am sending you a set of unmounted amethysts, which will be particularly suitable and becoming to your colouring. We have had a most delightful time with Mr. Latimer. I find him exceedingly manly—so kind and clever, quite out of the ordinary. We look forward to our stay at Latimer Court with the keenest

pleasure, not only because of our sincere liking for our host, but because we shall be so close to your dear mother, and shall be able to pop in upon her at all hours and seasons. Our love," &c., &c.; and with many flowery sentences the letter concluded.

Lucie replied with sincere thanks for the handsome gifts she had received, and at the same time she wrote a few words of graceful acknowledgment to Denis Latimer, for the exquisite necklace of beautiful pearls that had been sent down to the bride-elect with his good wishes attached.

It was going to be a very quiet wedding, merely the nearest relatives and one or two old friends. There was, nevertheless, much to be done in preparations, for Lucie was to be carried off by her husband for a tour abroad immediately after the ceremony, and there was little time to get together all the clothes she would need.

The house party was to assemble at Latimer Court just three days before the wedding, and as the time shortened and shortened, and the moment drew nearer for her trial, Penelope plunged deeper and faster into the business of preparing her sister's things.

She was apparently in high spirits—the laughing, merry Penelope of old, with a joke always on her lips, and sparkle in her eyes. Had her mother and Lucie been less preoccupied, they might have noticed that every now and then Penelope's laughter seemed to come in a spasmodic way, and that there seemed to be a kind of effort in her merriment; also that now and then a wan colourless look crept over the fair beauty of her face and changed it utterly.

But there was so much to be done, so much excitement and hurry, that Penelope was not submitted to any careful scrutiny inside the house; and though one pair of eyes watched her keenly and tenderly, they were careful not to let the girl have the faintest inkling of this.

Harold De Barch was in truth troubled about Penelope. The change that she thought was so carefully hidden, so well covered, had been palpable to him from the first. He was troubled not only because of his love, but because it hurt him to see this shadow on so fair and bright a jewel of humanity.

He was constantly at Laburnum Cottage. Penelope treated him behind his back with great irreverence.

"Here comes bogie again," she would cry to Lucie, as she saw the Rector's black coat coming up the pathway.

Lucie was always a little vexed with her sister on the question of the Rector. She had a vague hint of the truth. She guessed that something, more than mere interest and admiration, filled the Rector's heart for Penelope, and she always had a little reproof ready for the girl's very liberal indifference to the handsome young clergyman.

"Dear Pen," she said on one occasion, "I wish you would not call Mr. De Barch by such a stupid name, it—"

"I deny it is a stupid name!" cried Penelope, lightly. She was sitting at the window embroidering some initials on some handkerchiefs. She was an exquisite needle-woman, and her work was marvellous. "I think it is ever so much prettier than De Barch, and then it suits him, he is so solemn and—"

pursing for a word, "so stinky! Do you know what I mean? Lucie? he does not walk, he stalks like a gnom to and fro. I shall always call him Bogie as long as I live."

Lucie was nonplussed for a moment.

"I don't think mother likes it, Pen," she said; and this was awful of her, for her mother's name was a word to conjure with.

"I would not do anything to vex my angel mother for anything in the wide wide world," Penelope cried, with almost strange passion, and then she pulled herself up; "but," she said, deliberately, "I don't believe she minds. In any case, I will go and ask her this very minute."

"Pen! Pen!" Lucie ran hurriedly after her. "Pen, darling, be careful. He, Mr. De Barch, is there now—oh! do."

"No moment could be better," Penelope answered gravely. "I shall put the question to him at the same time!" and she actually carried her threat into practice, while Lucie retired to her corner again, covered with her blushes and mortification. Certainly Pen was what might be termed a handful occasion ally.

The Rector's pale face flushed a little as Penelope came into the room. Often as he went to the cottage he did not get many opportunities of a chat with the girl. She was like a will o' the wisp—here, there, and everywhere.

"I have something to ask you, mummy. Lucie has been scolding me. She says I have no right to call Mr. De Barch 'Bogie'; that you would not like it, and—"

Poor Mrs. Desborough literally gasped.

"Oh! Pen dear," she began, but the Rector was laughing heartily.

"Do you want to call me Bogie?" he asked Pen, half lightly, half tenderly.

"Not if you give me permission," was her demure reply.

She was perched on the arm of her mother's chair.

"I don't care for any authorised things," she cried, "not for any."

Mrs. Desborough put her delicate hands on the girl's pretty ones.

"Pen, my darling!" she said, with gentle reproof.

But there was no horror or reproof in Harold De Barch's handsome brown eyes. The love that this girl had inspired in his heart was fast becoming an infatuation.

"I want you to do something, Miss Penelope. I have come up on purpose to see you," he said, changing the subject with ready tact for Mrs. Desborough.

"Is it nice or nasty?"

He laughed slightly.

"It is something that I think will give you pleasure; nay, I do not think, I am sure," he said, gently, and then he went on to tell her he had received a deputation of village girls who wished to give Lucie a wedding present, but did not know what to choose, and then they had come to him for enlightenment.

"And I come to you," the Rector said.

"You will know best what Miss Desborough will like. She will treasure the gift, I know, whatever it should be, but it would give the girls greater pleasure if you would identify yourself with—"

Penelope sprang from the chair hurriedly.

"I will go to them at once," she cried.

"Where are they to be found—at the school-house? Will you wait one minute, Mr. De Barch? only one minute while I put on my hat and coat."

She was gone like a flash of lightning, as she spoke, and in less than three minutes she and Harold De Barch were walking briskly down the garden to the village.

It wanted only a week before the wedding, so there was a general wish that the girls' gift should be purchased at once and be placed among the other presents.

Penelope flung herself into the matter with all her heart and soul, receiving suggestions and listening to wishes, and to the inevitable little disagreements, with the greatest patience and interest conceivable.

The Rector, standing by, felt a thrill of new hope come into his heart as he saw Penelope in this mood. Despite his love, a doubt as to the wisdom of such a girl as his wife had now and then crossed his mind; but now he had a glimpse of the gentle, earnest, deep nature that ran beneath the sparkle of Penelope's outward manner, and his love deepened accordingly.

What dreams and visions flitted through his mind as he stood there looking at the lovely young face and graceful figure, such a contrast to the village young woman grouped about her. Hope had never seemed so definite, so dear, as at this moment, for it was almost



[BUT FOR MR. DE BURGH'S STRONG ARMS, PENELOPE WOULD HAVE ROLLED IGNOMINIOUSLY IN THE MUDDY DITCH!]

the first time he had been brought in contact with the girl's real self, and learnt the truth of herself as she really was. The momentous question was settled at last.

"I think I am something of a diplomatist, don't you, Mr. De Burgh?" Penelope said, with a laugh, as they left the school-house. "Really, I thought at one time I was in danger of being impaled on the 'fish knife and fork' faction when I appeared to lean in favour on the side of 'the book of family prayers' party. You see, by judiciously arranging that both presents can be purchased for the money collected, I have restored harmony and escaped with my life."

"You certainly showed enterprise and tact worthy of a better cause," the Rector answered.

They paced on for a little while in silence, and then Harold De Burgh said, hurriedly.—

"Miss Penelope, you have never been that ride with me you promised long ago."

"Did I promise? I don't remember. It sounds an awfully rash thing to have done; for, do you know, Mr. De Burgh, I can't ride. I stick on somehow; but the result is not graceful nor comforting. I don't think you would like me for a companion really." They had left the village streets, and were in a lane that was bordered by thick hedges and trees.

Harold De Burgh was beginning some hasty word of eager denial to this statement when Penelope said,—

"I am sure you would hate me," as they walked on, and then she came to a standstill suddenly. "Oh!" she said, in a whisper, "look at that squirrel—just look, isn't he lovely! now I wish I had him. What a tail! and what eyes. Now he is gone." "Oh, dear! where did he go? Did you see, Mr. De Burgh? Was it up or down? Down the tree, I think." With an agility that almost equalled the squirrel in question, Penelope jumped up on to the bank, and tried to peer through the thick bushes, clinging on to frail twigs in support as she did

so. "There he is! I can see him!" she was crying triumphantly, when the Rector called out, hurriedly, "Take care!" and in the very instant of his doing so, Penelope's foot slipped, and but for Mr. De Burgh's swiftness and strong arms she would have rolled ignominiously in the muddy ditch by the road-side. As it was, for one exquisite moment the young man held her lovely form in his arms close to his heart.

Penelope, stunned and a little frightened, though of course there had been no danger, rested where she was, for one instant not knowing indeed where she was; but as the Rector's voice, speaking eagerly, came close to her ear, she regained full consciousness, and at the very same moment as she took herself hurriedly away from his hold, her eyes encountered a pair of steel grey ones that seemed to cut her through and through with their scorn—eyes that belonged to a handsome clean-shaven young man who was in the lane, on horseback, coming towards them.

For the space of sixty seconds, perhaps, the blue eyes gazed into those cold grey ones; then Penelope turned icy, and her face became very white and then rosy red.

"Who would have thought of seeing you!" she cried weakly. But Denis was too angry to have much discrimination about him; all he knew was he had come upon a creature which would live with him to the grave. Penelope in the embrace of a man! and one whom, he had to acknowledge, was worthy to stand beside him his equal in every way.

His thoughts had been full of the girl as he rode slowly along, almost with self-reproach, and something like remorse, and with the yearning that her memory was entwined about with; and in the midst of it all, he had come upon her, alone with Harold De Burgh in a solitary lane with his arms about her, her head upon his shoulder. No wonder Denis was utterly deaf to the plaintive, eager

longing for self-vindication which rang in Penelope's voice.

"What are you doing here, prowling about like a marauding thief? you were not expected for another three days. You are a mysterious and unsatisfactory person!" she said, trying to keep her voice steady, and to stand erect on her trembling limbs.

Denis had taken off his hat and greeted the Rector courteously but coldly.

"I am just on my way to see your mother," he said, in his most chilly voice.

Penelope's courage revived at the sound.

"She will be delighted, and will give you some tea," she answered, and by sheer will she spoke just as usual. "Tell her to keep us some hot, we shall be in directly. Come, Mr. De Burgh, shall we go on? Mr. Latimer looks impatient. I had no idea he was so fond of tea."

Denis rode on savagely, her laughter ringing in his ears, and her beautiful face full of smiles brilliant as it had been when he last saw it blinding his sight and making the torture of his sudden jealousy still greater.

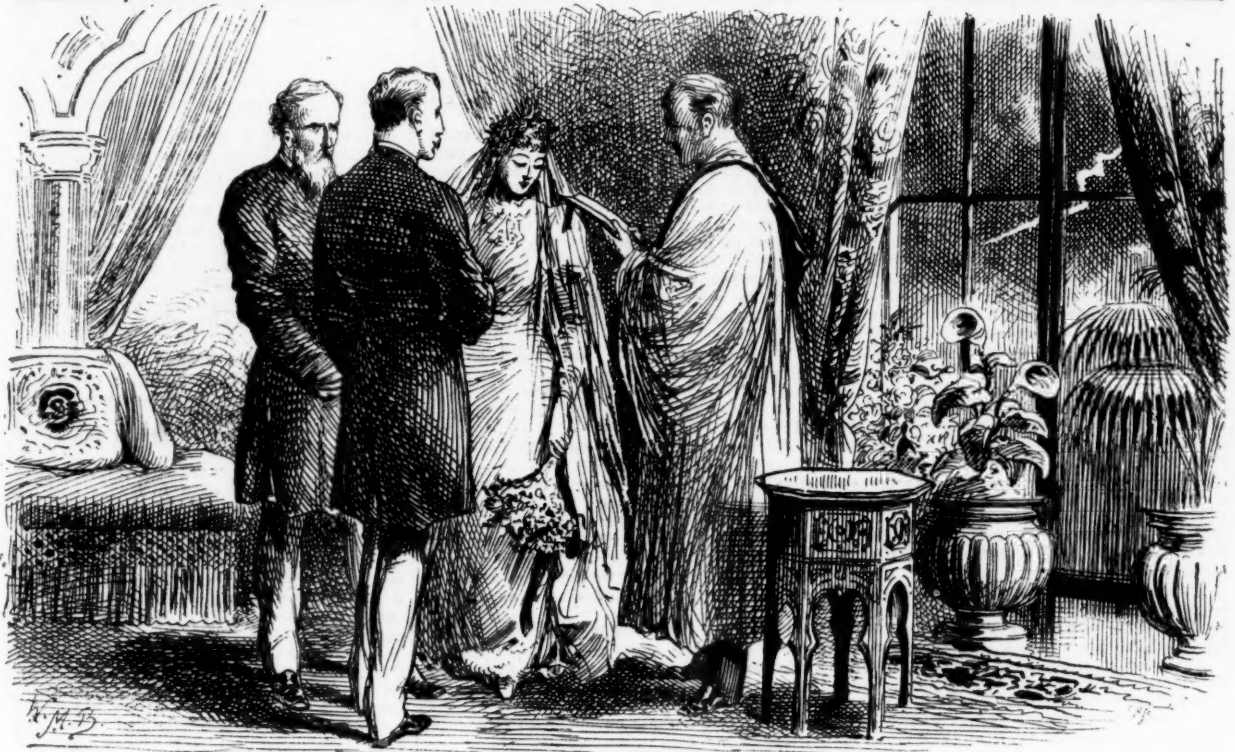
"She is a coquette, heartless, worthless," he said to himself. "I am well saved. I should have been a miserable man if I had given rein to my folly and made Penelope Deaborough my wife!"

And the while he said it he knew that he was perjuring himself, and that his "folly" was something that would never go; that his love for Penelope Deaborough was something that would last through his life.

(To be continued.)

A LUMINOUS crayon has been invented for the purpose of enabling lecturers to draw on the blackboard when the room is darkened for the use of the lantern. The invention is likely to prove of value, not only to lecturers, but also to those who wish to take notes in the dark.





[A STRANGE WEDDING.]

## BASIL'S BRIDE.

### CHAPTER IV.

#### A STRANGE PROPOSAL.

SOMEWHAT to his own surprise Basil slept well, and when he came down in the morning, and found Dolores and her father seated at the breakfast-table, looking just as ordinary well-bred people may be supposed to look, he was inclined to think fancy must have played him some trick in the night, and that the scene he had witnessed in the inner drawing-room had existed only in his imagination.

But a more searching glance into Mr. Verschoyle's face convinced him to the contrary. It wore an expression of anxious thought, the lines seemed to have deepened since yesterday, and his eyes rested on Dolores with a yearning love that was intensely pathetic.

"Aren't you well, father?" asked the girl, a trifle uneasily.

"Not very well," he answered, gently, "I have had no sleep all night, and I am a little tired in consequence. It is nothing very serious," he added, in a tone meant to be reassuring, glancing towards Basil, whose eyes were also fixed on his face.

Dolores did not seem satisfied, and after breakfast was over she hovered round her father, with a solicitude that had something absolutely maternal in it. He appeared slightly embarrassed by it, and presently went to his library, leaving the two young people together.

"There is something strange about my father this morning. I can't understand it," she said, in her frank, straightforward fashion, lifting her great dark velvet eyes to Captain Onesham as she spoke. "I have never known him to be ill, and if anything of the sort were to befall him, I should not know what to do."

"Surely you have some lady friends to whom you could send," said the young man, and he awaited her answer curiously.

It came immediately, accompanied by a shake of the head.

"No, I do not know a single woman except our two maid-servants. I wish I did," she added, a shadow sweeping over her brow. "I often think how delightful it would be to have a girl friend."

Basil was watching her intently, and he felt convinced that she was speaking the exact truth. Whoever the woman might be who had had a nocturnal interview with Mr. Verschoyle, it was quite clear that his daughter did not even suspect her existence.

A little later a message came from Captain Onesham to go to the library, and thither he at once proceeded, and found his host sitting in front of a writing-table that was strewn with papers of every description.

Mr. Verschoyle motioned him to a chair opposite, and after a moment's silence, said,—

"I told you yesterday that I had a plan for benefiting you, and I will lose no time in communicating it to you. I do not pretend that my motives are wholly disinterested, for I have the welfare of another person in view, even while I am ready to play the part of a beneficent Providence so far as you yourself are concerned." He took up a bank-book, opened it, and passed it to Basil. "Look at it, and see what my present balance at my bankers amounts to."

Considerably surprised by the request, Basil nevertheless obeyed it. The amount was so large that the young man put down the book in an astonishment that was not lessened when Mr. Verschoyle handed him various bonds and securities from which it was evident that the father of Dolores must be a man of very great wealth.

"I do not know why you should trouble to

show me all these documents," observed Basil, a little uneasily.

"You will understand better presently. In the first place I want to convince you that I am really what I represent myself to be, and this is the best way in which I can do so. Now, we will speak of Dolores. She is my child—the only creature I have left in the world to care for, and naturally her happiness is my first consideration. For a woman there is only one way of securing happiness, and that is by marrying a trustworthy man. Unfortunately girls, if left to themselves, are apt to be led astray by mere outward graces of person and manner, and my opinion is that it is better for their parents to choose for them. I will come to the point without delay. I wish Dolores to become the wife of a man who will do his best to protect her from all the evils of life, and I think I have found such a man in yourself. Will you marry her?"

Basil absolutely gasped with astonishment. He was totally unprepared for such a proposal, and at first he was almost inclined to believe that Mr. Verschoyle could not be serious. One glance however, at his face, convinced him to the contrary.

"Naturally you are surprised," continued the elder man, "and perhaps you think there is even a certain amount of indelicacy in the haste with which I desire to see my daughter wedded. But the circumstances are peculiar. I have a presentiment, which amounts to a certainty, that I shall not live long, and after my death what is to become of Dolores? I have no friend to whose protection I can commend her, and even if I had, I might hesitate before I gave anyone, save a husband, the right to control her actions. As I told you before, I knew your mother, and therefore you are not, in a sense, a stranger to me. Also, I am a judge of physiognomy, and I feel sure that, in spite of the errors of your past, you are a man to whom it would be impossible

to betray a trust. I am willing to pay your debts, and to settle a handsome income upon you, although the bulk of my wealth will be secured to Dolores. What do you say?"

"I know not what to say," stammered the young man. "Does your daughter—does Miss Verschoyle know anything of this?"

"Certainly not."

"Then she may have a strong objection to such an alliance as you propose."

"She may have, but I don't think she will. She is so accustomed to depend on my judgment that she is not likely to dispute it in this matter. Besides, you forget that she has seen nothing of the world, and therefore her affections are absolutely disengaged."

"And for that very reason, I should hesitate before taking any advantage of her inexperience," said Basil, more firmly.

Mr. Verschoyle smiled as if well pleased.

"Such an objection does you credit, but you don't understand the exigencies of the position. I have no time for scruples such as these. You must make up your mind, quickly—yes or no. If you like, you can leave me for awhile and think over what I have said and give me your decision on your return. But answer me one way or other, as quickly as you can, I implore you."

Basil hesitated once more, then bowed silently, and stepped out of the open French window on to the verandah.

To the right was a small shrubbery, and here he paced backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards, revolving the proposition in his mind. Should he accept it or not?

Surely no man was ever placed in a more difficult position, so tempting on the one hand, and yet so dangerous in its possible issues. Mr. Verschoyle offered him wealth and honour, and a beautiful girl who had saved his life.

But then he did not love her. Eulalie Stanhope had filled his heart until twenty-four hours ago, and even though she had been dethroned from her high pedestal, it would have seemed to Basil a species of sacrilege for any other woman to take her place so soon.

Then he had to take into consideration Mr. Verschoyle's anxiety regarding his daughter's future, and the debt of gratitude he owed Dolores.

A sudden revulsion had come over the young man's feelings, a horror of the awful crime of self-murder into which he had been so nearly hurried, and from which Dolores' ready courage and presence of mind had saved him. No danger of his again seeking to take his own life, and yet, what had he to look forward to if he did not accept Mr. Verschoyle's offer?

Finally he returned to the library with a firm step. His resolution was taken.

Mr. Verschoyle was sitting in exactly the same position as when he left him, except indeed that his face was covered by his hands. He looked up quickly as Basil entered.

"Well?" he breathed, in a tense whisper, and it was evident from his tone how anxiously he awaited the answer.

"I have decided," Basil said. "If Miss Verschoyle is willing to accept me, I promise to do my best to make her a good husband. I do not profess to be in love with her."

"That will come afterwards," exclaimed his host, eagerly, getting up and taking his hand, which he pressed warmly within his own. "I am, compared with you, an old man, and experience has taught me that the love that comes after marriage is better, purer, and more lasting than the passion that precedes it. You have chosen wisely, Captain Chesbata, and, for my own part, a great weight is lifted off my soul. Whatever happens now, I shall feel assured that Dolores' future is provided for."

"But what reason have you for supposing that anything is likely to happen which will render other protection than your own necessary?" asked Basil, colouring a little as he thought of the conversation he had overheard the preceding night.

A deeper shadow swept over the elder man's face.

"I cannot tell you my reason. If I were to do so you would probably laugh at it, but to me it is forcible enough. Now, as to breaking this to Dolores, I think I had better speak to her first."

"Certainly," exclaimed Basil, hastily. "She would look upon it as an unparalleled piece of presumption if I were to broach such a subject to her after less than a day's acquaintance. I only make one condition, and that is that she shall not be influenced or coerced in her decision, but left to her own free will. Is that understood?"

"Assuredly," answered Mr. Verschoyle, with some dignity. "You may be quite certain that I shall do nothing against her wishes."

While Dolores was summoned to this momentous interview with her father, Basil went once more out into the garden, where he waited, with a quickly beating heart, the result of the young girl's answer.

He wondered whether he had done well in letting himself be hurried into a marriage that his more sober senses condemned as romantic and yet mercenary.

Would it not have been wiser to have bidden the Verschoyles farewell, made his way to Liverpool, and taken a passage out to America, where, under an assumed name, he could have begun a new life as a clerk or an artisan?

He smiled rather bitterly to himself, and shook his head. His training had unfitted him for work, and existence under such conditions would have been miserable in the extreme to him. And yet, even with that alternative, he would have left a dishonoured name behind him in England.

He was aroused from his meditations by the sight of Dolores advancing slowly along the path.

She was looking more subdued and serious than he had as yet seen her, and her eyes were fixed gravely on the gravel at her feet.

She paused as she saw him, and he advanced towards her, reaching his hand in the vain endeavour to find some way of opening the impending conversation. As it happened she saved him the trouble.

"My father has been telling me that you wish to marry me," she said, with the utter simplicity and absence of shyness that seemed natural to her. "Of course I was a good deal taken by surprise, but if my father wishes it, and you wish it, I am quite willing to consent."

In spite of himself Basil could not help smiling at the childlike naiveté of the speech, and he bent down and kissed her hand in order to conceal the smile from her.

"Thank you," he said, briefly. "On my part I promise most solemnly to do all in my power to make you happy."

She was looking at him attentively, her head a little on one side, her lips half parted, a grave admiration in her velvety eyes.

Young as she was, little as she had seen of the world, she had nevertheless formed vague dreams of the lover who should come to woo her in the dim future, and it seemed to her as if the hero of her girlish visions must have taken the shape of Basil.

He was, indeed, an ideal lover so far as outward appearance went; and as regarded the lack of warmth in his manner, why, she was too unsophisticated to put it down to its proper cause.

"He never loved who loved not at first sight," says Romeo; and Dolores, in her girlish innocence, entirely agreed with this sentiment. Neither did it seem unnatural to her. Her mirror told her that she was beautiful, and even her few years of life had taught her that beauty means power.

"Will you go in to my father?" she added, after a moment's pause. "He told me to ask you to do so."

He bowed and complied, while Dolores, after standing quite still for a few minutes, as if

lost in thought, suddenly put on her hat, and started for the wood.

She was filled with a desire to see the place where she and her fiancé had first met—where she had snatched the revolver from him, and had told him Providence had sent her to save him.

She believed that this was the case, and the belief may have had something to do with the readiness with which she had acceded to Mr. Verschoyle's desire.

What passed at that interview no one knew, but Dolores' faith in her father was supreme—anything he wished was quite sure to be right in her eyes, even when it went so far as the surrender of her liberty.

She stood under the shadow of the trees, and looked round with her wide, bright, bird-like gaze.

Every inch of the ground was familiar to her, every bush, every bramble; but to-day they all appeared to have taken a certain strangeness and unreality.

"The same, the same, yet not the same. Ah! never, never more!"

Her eyes were caught by the yellow glitter of something half-buried in leaves beneath her foot.

She picked it up, and looked at it intently. It was a miniature—or, rather, had been one; but now it was crushed and blurred almost beyond recognition. One feature, however, was uninjured—the mouth, which was an extremely beautiful one, with sharp, clear-cut curves; and Dolores, as she put the mutilated likeness away in her pocket, said to herself that if ever she saw the original—which was an unlikely event enough—she should know her by her lips.

She little thought how and when she would next gaze on that portrait!

## CHAPTER V.

### "MARRIED IN HASTE."

THAT same evening a strange group stood in the luxurious, oriental-looking drawing room of Mr. Verschoyle's residence, which was lighted up by half-a-dozen stained glass lamps. The scent of household flowers hung on the air like heavy clouds of incense, and the deep silence was only broken by the sound of the swift downpour of rain outside—interrupted every now and again by a heavy peal of thunder as a tongue of blue light shot suddenly across the murky blackness of the sky.

A clergyman in a white surplice stood in the middle of the room, looking puzzled and uneasy, as if he doubted the suitability of his surroundings. Before him stood Basil Chesbata, a strange, strained expression on his pale face while he held the hand of Dolores Verschoyle, who, dressed in white from head to foot, and with natural orange-blossoms twined in her hair, looked lovely as a dream. On her right was her father, who appeared agitated and feverishly anxious that the ceremony should come to an end as quickly as possible. No one else was in the room.

Verily money is a great power; and by its aid things that seem like impossibilities can be compassed.

Basil had started for London at mid-day to pay his fifty guineas and procure a special licence from the Archbishop of Canterbury, and even now the solemn words were being spoken that would bind him and Dolores together, "till death do them part!"

The service was over, the ring was on her finger, the clergyman with a sigh of relief had laid down the book, and Mr. Verschoyle stepped forward to kiss and congratulate his daughter, when a quivering shaft of blue light seemed absolutely to fill the room, and was followed by a reverberating peal of thunder, terrific in its force.

Dolores shrieked, blank staring, and hid her face in her father's arms.

"Just a bad omen!" she whispered. "Does



it mean that my marriage is not sanctioned of Heaven?"

"Certainly not," he replied, smoothing her hair under its coronal of blossom buds, and trying to steady his own voice so as to reassure her. "What has the weather to do with your happiness, my darling? This wedding of yours is the beginning of a new life for you, infinitely sweeter and fuller of joy than all the years that have gone before. Take her, Basil," he added, pushing her gently towards her husband. "Yours must be the lips that must first touch hers—you have a prior right even to her father."

Basil started a little, and Dolores, who was looking at him, fancied his face grew paler. It struck her with a curious chill that there was none of the rapture of a newly-wedded bridegroom in his eyes. Nevertheless, he bent down and kissed her lips—for the first time.

She drew back, vaguely disappointed. His lips were as cold as the carvings was. How different to her father, who, as he strained her tightly to his bosom, rained down a shower of tender, loving kisses on her mouth, her cheeks, her hair.

"Oh, my darling!" he exclaimed, in a low, tender voice. "Heaven grant I have acted for the best in this great crisis of your life. I have tried my utmost, but perhaps—"

He checked himself abruptly, conscious that the clergyman who had performed the marriage service was looking at him curiously.

And well he might—for there was something in this hurried wedding, in the extreme youth of the bride, the coldness of the bridegroom, and the strangely Eastern gorgeousness of the drawing-room that strongly appealed to Mr. Lake's sense of the incongruous.

He had been vicar of the parish for ten years or more, but in all that time he had never once set eyes on these parishioners of his, who lived so secluded a life in the tree-hidden white house.

As a matter of fact, he was glad to take leave and get away, even though outside the rain was pelted down with an almost tropical violence that threatened to wet him to the skin before he could get home. Mr. Verschoyle accompanied him to the door, and paid him his fees.

"I did not know that the marriage service was such a solemn one," said Dolores, looking at her husband with large, grave eyes, as they found themselves alone. "I had never read it through; had you?"

"Yes," responded Basil, in an embarrassed manner, for he remembered a certain Sunday evening in Park Lane, when he and Enallie Stanhope had read it out together, and the remembrance at this moment was not altogether pleasant.

"For better, for worse, for richer, for poorer," murmured the girl-bride half to herself; then with a swift movement she came and stood in front of him, laying her two small hands on his breast. "I don't think when I first said I would marry you, I quite realised what it meant," she said. "I did not think it was half such a serious matter. In point of fact I had not thought much about it any way, but now it seems to me that if a man and woman undertake to marry each other, they undertake to devote themselves, body and soul, to their new life—forsaking all others. There must be something divine that grew up in your heart for me so quickly—a flame sent straight down from Heaven, or surely in the midst of all the wretchedness in which I found you yesterday—was it only yesterday? It seems weeks ago—you would never have been so anxious to bind your life to mine. Well, I will repay you. For the sake of the love you bear me, I will love you too."

A sharp pang shot through Basil's soul at the sight of her beautiful young enthusiasm. Ah! if he could only meet it in the same spirit. If he could only fall on his knees before her, and promise her, that the love of which she had formed such a lofty conception was indeed the prompter of their marriage.

But he was no hypocrite, and he dared not utter a lie, even though the sweet eyes were full of wistful entreaty, and the scarlet mouth grew tremulous with feeling, as she uplifted her face to his. For the first time it struck him that he had done her a wrong—a terrible, cruel wrong that nothing save love could redeem.

And he had no love to give her.

"I hope we shall be happy together," he said; and the words sounded stiff and formal in her ears.

She drew back, her hands falling limply to her sides. There was a puzzled wonderment in her eyes, but even yet she did not understand, and what she might have said was interrupted at that moment by the entrance of her father.

"It is a dreadful night," he said, shivering a little. "I am glad I have not to go out in it. The elements seem at war with each other. How pale you are, Dolores! Has the thunder frightened you?"

Not from terror was she pale, but rather from stress of emotion—an emotion that her pride would not let her show. She was vaguely conscious of cruel disappointment, but she was inclined to blame herself rather than Basil as being its cause.

"I will go upstairs and take off my veil and wreath," she said, quietly, and Basil hurried to the door, in order to open it for her.

She thanked him with a little courteous movement of her head, as she passed out, and then he came back to the table near which Mr. Verschoyle was standing, his eyes fixed intently on the rug at his feet.

He roused himself with an effort, and took hold of Basil's arm.

"Come," he said, leading the way to the secret panel. "We will go to the inner room where there will be no danger of our being disturbed, for I have something of importance to say to you, and it can only be said while we are alone."

As the panel moved back, Basil thought with a shudder of the night before when he had stood in the opening, and witnessed that strange scene whose memory would never leave him. A sudden resolve came to him. He would tell Mr. Verschoyle what he had seen, and so rid himself of the horrible feeling of having played the eavesdropper and the spy.

But just as he began to speak, his companion silenced him with a quick motion of his hand.

"Wait!" he said, peremptorily. "Whatever you may have to say to me is of less importance than what I have to say to you, and my communication must have the priority. I am going to reveal to you a secret concerning Dolores, which, as she is now your wife, it concerns you to know—a secret which—"

He paused; his face growing yet paler than it had been before. Great beads of perspiration stood on his brow, and he grasped hold of the back of the chair as if for support, while his eyes stared straight before him with a certain strained fixedness that surprised Basil.

The room was only dimly lighted by the swinging lamp which hung from the ceiling, and which was apparently never permitted to go out. Just beneath it was the crystal globe, covered as before, with dark velvet. For the rest the room was in shadow, and yet, as he looked, Basil became aware of something curious in the atmosphere—a faint, thin silvery mist, that was creeping slowly upwards, lending the more distant objects a strange far-off, wraith-like appearance, like nothing he had ever seen before. Slowly it rose—slowly and silently, until it reached him and Mr. Verschoyle where they stood under the lamp.

Then an exclamation—what it was Basil could not tell—escaped the elder man's lips, and he waved his hand towards the panel.

"Go!" he cried, sharply and peremptorily. "go while there is yet time—quick—quick!"

Basil looked at him in astonishment, but there was a stringent command in the expression of his face that had its effect at once, and without another word the young soldier stumbled with uncertain movements towards the panel—which all this time had been closed.

It was with some difficulty that he found it; his head felt light and giddy, there was a suffocating sensation in his throat—he seemed to himself like one who has drunk too much wine, and yet, as it happened, neither wine nor spirits had touched his lips during the whole of that day.

He pushed the panel open, flinging aside the heavy oriental stuffs that draped it on the other side, then he turned round to see whether Mr. Verschoyle was following. But he could distinguish nothing, save indeed, those silvery fumes that each moment seemed to grow denser.

"Mr. Verschoyle, where are you?" he exclaimed, a strange fear making itself audible in his voice.

There was no answer, and he repeated his question. At the same moment a deep groan of agony came from the interior of the room, followed almost immediately by a crash, and another groan fainter than the first. Basil's first impulse was to return, but before his foot crossed the threshold, he was driven back by the subtle, penetrating odour of the mist that seemed to suffocate him even as he stood there. As well might he have tried to make his way through a black wall of impenetrable smoke.

Dizzy and bewildered, he staggered into the outer drawing-room, not quite sure whether his senses were not on the point of giving way. A bowl of roses stood on one of the tables, and he threw them out on the floor, while he laved his throbbing temples copiously with the water that had kept the flowers alive. It did him good, but even yet he did not feel sure of himself, and noticing that the French window was open, he went towards it, and stood outside on the verandah, while he breathed in the fresh, wet, flower-scented air.

The rain had ceased for awhile, but blue tongues of flame still quivered athwart the black heavens, and, away in the distance, the thunder muttered like the angry menace of some disappointed fury.

The fresh air did Basil good, restored to him his self-possession; and when he went back he took the precaution of covering his mouth and nostrils with his handkerchief.

To his amazement he found the panel closed, and, try as he could, he could not get it open. He pushed, shook, and coaxed it—all to no avail; then he went out into the passage, intending to call one of the household to his aid.

Just at the foot of the stairs he met Dolores who had taken off her veil and flowers, and was now attired in her ordinary dress—white, of course, for she never wore anything else. She came to a pause as she met her husband, startled by the wildness of his eyes.

"What is the matter?" she exclaimed. "What has happened?"

"Come into the drawing-room quickly, and see if you can unfasten the secret panel!" he answered, incoherently. But she only stared at him in greater amazement.

"The secret panel!" she repeated. "I don't know what you mean!"

Nevertheless she followed him, and stood on one side, while he tried once more to move the spring.

"What is it you want to do?" she asked—for as a matter of fact she was in complete ignorance of the existence of the panel and the apartment into which it led.

He did not reply. At last his efforts were crowned with success; the panel moved slowly on one side, and the newly-made husband and wife crossed the threshold immediately after.

Strangely enough, the mist had cleared away, and all that remained of it was a sickly

odour not unlike that of stephanotis flowers. The dim light shone down on a picture that would haunt those who saw it for many a long day—a picture whose very atmosphere seemed laden with crime.

Stretched on the floor at full length was the body of Sigmund Verschoyle. The face was curiously waxen, the wide-open eyes stared upwards in a stony glare of horror. The face alone would have been sufficient to tell the truth, even if it had not been for the tiny stream of crimson that ebbed slowly from under the right arm, which lay across the breast. Mr. Verschoyle was dead, and on the floor at his side lay the crystal globe, broken into a thousand fragments.

Dolores was made a bride and an orphan within the same hour.

## CHAPTER VI.

### AN UNOLVED MYSTERY.

Born to Dolores and Basil the discovery of the dead man, and the hours that followed it, seemed like a horrible dream. The first of the household to arrive in the inner room was Abdul, and the poor creature's grief, as he threw himself beside his master's body, was pitiful to witness.

One of the man-servants was immediately despatched for a doctor, and then Basil had to force himself into at least a semblance of self-control, for on him devolved the duty of taking whatever steps might be necessary for the discovery of the murderer, and also assuming the position of master of the house.

Strange indeed had been the series of events that had ended in making him one of the principal actors in a tragedy whose mystery was destined to remain so long unsolved.

Poor Dolores! a stony despair seemed to have taken possession of her. She threw herself beside her father's dead body, embracing it passionately, but never uttering a single sob. Her misery was too great for the relief of tears.

At last Basil raised her gently, and took her away into the adjoining room, where he seated her on one of the numerous divans. He would have given five years of his life to have been able to comfort her; but the position was so altogether strange that he could find no words in which to fittingly clothe his sympathy.

"Have you no friends for whom we could send?" he asked, with a puzzled knitting of his brows.

She shook her head hopelessly.

"I have no friends at all."

"And your father, had he none either?"

"No," below her breath.

Basil pulled hard at his chesnut moustache, a way he had when troubled or excited. At such a crisis as the present a female companion would have been of inestimable service both as regarded Dolores and himself, for she would have helped in every way.

He rapidly went over a list of his own so-called friends—fashionable women in society, who had leaned over their carriages to talk to him in the park, who had invited him to their parties, gone with him to the opera, laughed and flirted with him whenever occasion offered. There was not one of these whom he could ask to comfort his poor little unloved bride.

While he was debating, Dolores raised her eyes, stony and despairing, but flashing with a momentary gleam of anger.

"What do I want with friends?" she exclaimed, passionately. "Friends cannot bring the dead back to life again!"

"No; but they might give you help and sympathy."

"I want neither. I would rather bear my burden alone."

And yet she looked at him wistfully. Was he not her husband, and was it not his place to give her that "help and sympathy" which he wanted to bring in from the outside?

Perhaps he felt the implied reproach, for he

sat down beside her and tried to take her hand. If he had been a less conscientious man his task would have been easier, for then he would not have been haunted by that wretched sense of wrong-doing, the remembrance that he had married her not for love, but because such a marriage would help to set him straight with the world, and enable him to face the life which would otherwise have been impossible to him.

"I wish I could comfort you, Dolores," he murmured. "Heaven knows my heart bleeds for your sorrow. What I meant was that I shall have to leave you presently, there will be so much for me to see to, and then you will be alone."

"Better so than to have people near me whose presence I should hate," she rejoined, shortly; and then she clasped her hands across her knees, and remained quite still, with the same stony look in her eyes.

It had not departed when the doctor came—a slight, thin, white-haired man named Leger, whose grave face grew graver as he knelt beside Mr. Verschoyle's body.

The only wound visible was a small one on the right wrist—a mere pin-prick as it seemed, although a considerable quantity of blood had flowed from it.

"And yet it must have caused death!" murmured the doctor, more to himself than to his companion. "It is stranger—stranger than any case that ever came under my notice before. Such a puncture could not of itself do much harm—one would think." He turned to Basil. "Have you found the instrument that inflicted this wound yet?"

"No. As a matter of fact I have not looked," rejoined the young man, and therefore he and the doctor began their search.

They had not far to seek. On the floor, close to where the body lay, they found a long piece of silver, pointed at the one end like a stiletto, and stained with blood. Mr. Leger examined it curiously, but with very palpable caution.

"Do you think the wound could have been self-inflicted?" asked Basil, not so much because he believed that Mr. Verschoyle had taken his own life, as because he wished to hear the doctor's real opinion on the point.

Mr. Leger shook his head very decidedly.

"It could have been self-inflicted, but I feel very convinced that it was not."

"And your reasons?"

"One reason is that it is on the right wrist, and supposing it to be a case of suicide, the arrow or stiletto—I don't know what to call it—must have been held in the left hand. By the way, was Mr. Verschoyle a left-handed man?"

"No."

"Then you see how unlikely the theory of suicide must be. To me, the case seems clearly one of murder; and if you'll take my advice you'll lose no time in sending for the police—that is to say if you have not already done so."

The police came and took possession of the house, investigated the entrances and exits, questioned Basil and the other inmates, and left not a stone unturned in their efforts to discover the murderer.

The next day the newspapers were full of the mysterious crime, which was rendered all the more mysterious by the circumstances that surrounded it.

Basil was questioned and cross-questioned, and he affirmed very positively his belief that the dead man had not taken his own life.

One of his chief reasons for this belief lay in the fact that a few minutes before his death he had been in the act of communicating to his son-in-law some secret which he evidently regarded as of great importance, and he was only brought to a pause by the sight of the fumes that were rising at the other end of the room.

What the drug was which had caused these fumes, and who had placed it there, was still a mystery; but the most probable theory

seemed to be that the murder was premeditated, and the murderer had used the drug as a means of making his escape unseen.

It followed that he must have been in the apartment before the entrance of the two gentlemen, and Basil was of opinion that he escaped while he himself was standing at the window striving to recover from the semi-stupor into which he had been thrown.

A new element of mystery arose in the sudden disappearance of Abdul, who left the house the day after his master's death, and could not be traced. How he contrived to get away without the cognizance of the police, who were keeping the strictest possible watch, seemed unfathomable, and also how he contrived to leave no clue behind him was also stranger, for it seemed improbable that a man of his colour could possibly remain unnoticed, even in the environs of London. But so it was, and although every effort was made to trace him, they were entirely unsuccessful.

Naturally enough, a general feeling sprang up amongst outsiders that he was the murderer of poor Verschoyle, but Basil did not share this belief. His own suspicions pointed to the lady whose strange midnight interview with the master of the house he had witnessed, and of which he gave full details to the Inspector of Police. The latter apparently attached great importance to the story, and at once tried to gain some clue to the identity of the woman.

"Of course we shall be able to find out all about her," he said, cheerfully, to Basil. "Experience has taught me that however much any person may entold themselves in mystery, it is yet quite certain that someone will notice and remember them. No one understands even the difficulty of hiding a thing until they have tried it, and in the case of a person the difficulty is ten times greater. Rest assured, we shall soon know all about this wonderful lady who pretended to read the future."

But events did not tend to carry out theory, and, when the inquest was held, the police had to acknowledge themselves baffled, for neither Abdul nor the beautiful dark-eyed lady were forthcoming. Search had been made for them high and low, advertisements had been put in the papers, rewards had been offered; but all to no avail.

Medical evidence proved that the wound had been caused by the silver arrow found near the body, and that it had been steeped in deadly poison. The exact nature of the poison doctors failed to determine for it was unknown to the Pharmacopoeia of the West, but its virulence was proved by the swiftness with which it did its fatal work.

The verdict returned by the Coroner's jury was one of "wilful murder against some person or persons unknown."

Basil found himself, by virtue of his wife's fortune, a rich man. Dolores refused to interest herself in her wealth, and left all business details to him. Her one desire seemed to be to get away from the White House, and as soon as possible the newly-wedded pair left England for Italy, where, on the lovely lake of Lugano, the young bride partially recovered her health and spirits. But she was not quite the same, a shadow seemed to lie upon her beauty, and her manner had grown less impetuous and childlike. Basil supposed she was growing older, and that seeing more people, and travelling about the world, had had a sobering effect upon her. But there was something more than this in her altered manner, something that, if he had loved her, he would have easily fathomed. As it was, it puzzled him.

Outwardly he was all that a devoted husband could be—thoughtful, kind, attentive. He was always ready to go out with his wife for rides or drives, to accompany her on her walks, to row her about the lake, under the purple shadow of the vine-clad hills, or to read to her indoors if she preferred it. But there was a gulf between them, and it seemed as if it could never be spanned. He was an experi-



enough man of the world, loving society and its constant excitement, and used to the companionship of women of the world, whose creed it is that no man shall ever be dull in their presence.

Dolores was nothing more than a school-girl, and inexperienced at that. She was naive, piquante, delightful when she allowed her bright spirits full play; but there was a constraint between her and her husband, and, as a consequence, he often found her silent and distraite, and more than once she caught him yawning with a weariness which, she shrewdly suspected her presence was answerable for.

This was natural enough, seeing that they had no mutual interests or recollections, and a certain delicacy withheld Basil from talking to her about his past life.

"Why don't you go back to England?" she said to him one evening, when, after dinner, they were seated on the terrace of the hotel, looking down at the little Italian town below with its twinkling lights and the calm waters of the lake beyond, which lay like a sheet of liquid silver in the moonlight. "It seems to me you would be happier there amongst your old associations than you are here."

Basil coloured deeply, and stroked his moustache.

"I am happy enough here," he returned, in a slightly embarrassed manner.

Dolores laughed, and an attentive ear might have distinguished a ring of pain in the laugh.

"You may be happy, but you are not amused."

"God gracious, Dolores, what a distinction!"

"It is a true one."

"Is it? I'm not so sure of that. Besides, amusement is not the end and aim of a man's life."

"Oh," she returned, innocently. "I thought it was."

Basil broke into a smile.

"If I did not know you to be incapable of it, I should think you intended to be satirical," he said, puffing away at his cigar, while his eyes were fixed on the dark figure of a man who was walking backwards and forwards on the terrace below, and glancing very frequently at the husband and wife. "Is it the other way round, Dolores—are you tired of Italy, and longing for England?"

"No. I don't much care where I am," she answered, indifferently. Then, after a moment's pause, she added, "But I would as soon be in England as anywhere else."

"Would you really?"

"Certainly. Why not?"

"In that case," he said, with alacrity, "we will pack up our traps and get back as soon as possible. We have been away nearly three months, and though the season will be almost over in London we shall be sure to find some few people in town even yet. I'll tell Jarvis at once, and he can make preparations without delay."

Captain Chesham had his old valet back again, and no one rejoiced more sincerely than Jarvis at his master's altered circumstances. Strange enough, the valet had taken a great fancy to Dolores, and she had no sincerer admirer than her husband's valet.

Basil turned to go in order to give the necessary instructions, when a look at the solitary figure down below made him come back.

"By the way, Dolores, if I were you I shouldn't stay out here any longer."

"Why not?" bringing her eyes back from their far-off gaze at Monte Generoso, whose grand outline stood up on her right, clear and distinct against the skyline.

"Because," hesitating, "you may take cold."

She shrugged her shoulders disdainfully.

"Nonsense! I never take cold, and there is certainly no risk on such an evening as this."

"Well, then, to tell you the truth, I don't care to leave you here alone. It is just pos-

sible that dark-eyed man down there might come and speak to you. I noticed at the table d'hôte how intently he was looking at you, and I thought it was infernal cheek on his part."

"I noticed it too," observed Dolores, thoughtfully; "but the 'cheek,' as you call it, didn't strike me. There was something peculiar in his gaze. I fancied I must remind him of someone he knew. I am sure he would not be capable of annoying me, so you may leave me with an easy conscience."

And yet, after all, Basil proved himself partly right, for no sooner had he disappeared inside the hotel than the stranger, throwing away his cigar, came forward and raised his hat. Dolores's handkerchief happened to have fallen from her lap, and he picked it up and restored it to her.

This slight action was made the excuse for a remark, and almost before she knew it, the young girl found herself talking to him of the beauties of the neighbourhood.

There was something in the man that attracted her, why, she could hardly have told. It was not his handsome face, though that in itself was interesting from its very peculiarity.

Startlingly pale, the dark eyes shone out from it with extraordinary brilliance, and the pallor was further accentuated by the excessive blackness of the heavy moustache drooping over the lips, and the waves of hair tossed back from the marble forehead.

He was a man whose age it would have been difficult to guess, it might be anything between thirty and fifty. His name, he informed Dolores, was Lascelles, a name that might have been either French or English.

What his nationality was he did not mention. It is true he spoke English well, but it was with a slight accent that made the young girl fancy him a foreigner.

"I regret you think of leaving Lugano, madame," he said, in his low, musical, and deeply respectful tones. "I had promised myself the pleasure of your acquaintance if you had remained here. But doubtless madame grows homesick?"

"No," Dolores returned, a little bitterly. She herself did not know the bitterness was there; but her companion's sharp ears detected it at once. "I care no more for one place than another, but I think my husband will be happier in England."

"Ah! monsieur tires of Lugano?"

"Naturally enough. You see, we cannot always be rowing on the lake or taking walks, and there is very little else for a man to do here."

Privately, Mr. Lascelles was of opinion that a man might find very delightful employment simply in being the companion of such an extremely beautiful young lady. But then, he was not the young lady's husband!

What he would have said was not destined to be known, for just then Basil, having given his directions to Jarvis, came out on the terrace lighting a fresh cigar.

He looked by no means well pleased as he saw the handsome foreigner standing in front of his wife; but Dolores forestalled any remark he might have made by murmuring a few words of introduction, which he had no alternative but to acknowledge. Still, he contrived to make Mr. Lascelles see that his presence was far from agreeable to him, and shortly afterwards the latter bowed and said, "Au revoir."

As soon as he had gone, Basil turned to his wife, with an annoyed air.

"Do you know you have done a very foolish and imprudent thing, Dolores?"

She burst into a little silvery laugh.

"It is not for the first time, *mon ami*, and probably won't be the last."

"That has nothing to do with the point. I object to your talking to casual acquaintances whom you may chance to pick up at an hotel."

Perhaps he himself did not know how sharp

his tone was. A rebellious light came in his wife's beautiful eyes—her lip curled.

"And I object to be treated like a child, and kept in leading-strings."

"As to that, you are in reality little more than a child, and it is my duty to protect you from your own ignorance. You will know better when you are older what a married lady is expected to do. Meanwhile it is my desire that if Mr. Lascelles should try to force himself on your notice again, you will show him unmistakably that you have no wish to continue his acquaintance. Do you hear?"

"I hear," replied Dolores, calmly, "but I may tell you that I haven't the slightest intention of being rude to Mr. Lascelles, and if we happen to meet again—which is not very likely, as we shall be leaving to-morrow—I shall certainly treat him in a friendly manner."

Saying which, she made him a haughty little bow, and went away, her silken train rustling as it swept over the terrace. There had been a woman's contradiction in the way she had received his advice; but her heart was sore, and in reality this Mr. Lascelles had exercised a curiously soothing effect on her—an effect that she would certainly not object to have renewed. There was no sort of coquetry in this, as Basil was inclined to suspect.

As a matter of fact, Dolores had lately lived in a world of her own, and though she saw a good many people, she spoke to very few, and was intimate with none. The life, in spite of the constant variety, was very lonely, and Basil could hardly guess how delightful was any kind of sympathy to her—sympathy that was either masculine or feminine.

Some subtle instinct told her that the efforts Lascelles had made to make her acquaintance, had their origin in something deeper than a man's casual admiration for a pretty face. She would have been confirmed in this idea if, later on, she could have seen him pacing backwards and forwards on the terrace, looking up at the room which he knew to be hers—in his eyes a deep sadness.

"She is not happy," he murmured to himself, pausing for a moment near the spot where he had spoken to her earlier in the evening. "There is no sympathy between her and her husband, and her youth is spoiled—her beautiful womanhood is ruined by it. Great Heavens! And I would give my life to secure her happiness!"

His head fell forward on his breast, and he remained for some moments lost in thought. Then he said to himself,—

"Would it be better to reveal the truth to her, I wonder?" He shook his head. "No; first of all I must find a key to the mystery, then it will be time enough to let her share the secret."

(To be continued.)

THE natives of Gibraltar, and also the Moors across the strait, have a tradition that somewhere on the rock there exists a cavern whence a subterranean passage leads under the strait to the mountains on the other side. The existence of this passage, they say, is known to the monkeys, who regularly use it in passing from one continent to the other.

The hair falls out when the strength of its roots is insufficient to sustain its weight any longer, and a new hair will take its place unless the root is diseased. For this reason each person has a certain definite length of hair. When the hair begin to split or fall out, massage of the scalp is excellent, says the National Barber. Place the tips of the fingers firmly upon the scalp, and then vibrate or move the scalp while holding the pressure steadily. This will stimulate the bloodvessels underneath, and bring about better nourishment of the hair. A brush of unevenly tufted bristles is also excellent to use upon the scalp, not the hair.

# JASPER PALLISTER'S GRANDDAUGHTER.

## CHAPTER XVI.

JIM THROWS UP THE SPONGE.

It was a long time before Mrs. Macdonald felt sufficiently recovered from the shock she experienced on learning of Rosalynn's perfidy, to make up her mind what course she should follow with regard to him.

The two women sat together all that evening in close conversation, and Tessa told her further particulars of her early life, of her marriage and her desertion; and as Mrs. Macdonald listened, pity and indignation swelled her bosom, pity for the unmerited sufferings of the beautiful girl beside her, and indignation at the cold brutality with which she had been treated by the man who had that day asked her to be his wife.

She felt sullied—degraded—when she thought of his words of love. She shuddered when she recalled the touch of his hand, and the kiss he had pressed on her forehead. And then a dark and terrible suspicion arose in her breast and filled her with horror. Had Rosalynn any hand in the grim tragedy she had interrupted, when she had saved Tessa from a living death! For the first time she seemed to have a vague idea of the answer to Tessa's question, "Why, did Roscoe Cassone seek to take away my life?" and a dim vision of the reasons that might have actuated him in his horrible task rose before her.

"We will go; we will leave this and return to London. We will hide ourselves from this man," said Armada at last. "I will not run the risk of meeting him again—of being insulted by his words of pretended love—by his vile presence. I will write to him before we start, Tessa, and tell him it can never be, that I know his perfidy and wickedness, and that for the future we are strangers to each other."

There was not much time in which to make preparations for a move, but Mrs. Macdonald was an energetic woman, and accustomed to act promptly where despatch was necessary. By next evening everything was ready for a start, and Mrs. Macdonald sat down and penned her letter of dismissal to Lord Rosalynn.

It took some time to write, for Armada found it hard to express her feelings sufficiently emphatically, and yet to keep the strength of her words within bounds; but at length the letter was written and posted, and she and Tessa were once more in the train, on their way to London, where Mrs. Macdonald had decided to stay for a short time and then start for Italy with Tessa, so soon as her cousin Giovanni should arrive to escort them thither.

Rosalynn received the letter at his club, where, as was his custom, he passed the greater part of each day. Town was empty and his club empty, but till his business with his creditors and Joseph Hume was settled, he found it best to remain at hand. He felt bored and depressed and in no very good humour, as, after Mrs. Macdonald's epistle had been allowed to lie unopened beside him for some time, whilst he perused certain sporting columns in a well-known paper, he took up the gaily emblazoned envelope and tore it open.

"By Jove! I suppose I shall see the Rosalynn coat of arms resplendent in all the colours of the rainbow on my lady's envelopes shortly," he muttered. "Thorough Yankee taste that!" and he crumpled up the cover on which poor Armada's initials were gaily printed in crimson, blue, and gold, and threw it scornfully aside. "Now let us see what the widow has to say for herself."

He glanced carelessly at the letter at first, then started, a heavy frown contracting his

brows, and, as he read on, his face growing stern and livid.

"By Heaven! How has that old story got to her ears?" he muttered. "Who has been talking to her about me? An impudent letter; she shall pay for this. Fancy a woman like Mrs. Armada Macdonald presuming to preach to me—not only to refuse my offer, but to tell me to my face I have insulted her by it. Ha, ha! She has spirit enough for a dozen, a regular little spitfire! How angry she is—vexed, mortified, past all bearing; no doubt, because she imagines she has lost that countless coronet she deemed herself so sure of wearing. Haught the vanity of women is past all understanding; their love and reverence for rank inexplicable. Never mind, my brave madame," and he smiled, unseeing. "I will soon make things straight with you, and bring you to your bearings. I can prove to you I am not married, that, even for the sake of your own dear self, I would not be persuaded into the folly of committing bigamy. Married! Yes, I will not deny to you that once in the days of my early youth I was led away by the beauty and charm of a penniless girl, and so far forgot prudence as to marry her; but,"—and his face changed again and became terrible in the repulsiveness of its expression—"I rid myself of that incubus, and am a free man now. You coronet is safe, madame, and I will prove it to you, to your own satisfaction."

He paused and took up Armada's letter again, and read it over carefully.

"Whose work is this, I wonder? She must know somebody who has some acquaintance with me and my early life. It will not do to leave her under the influence of my enemies. I must find out who it is who gave her this precious piece of information. I must hurry matters on. To-morrow is the day on which she promised to give me her reply. I will go down to Brighton, notwithstanding this precious affidavit, as myself eight in my fair one's estimation; console, comfort, flatter her; and return with the happy day fixed for our wedding."

In spite, however, of the apparent carelessness with which Rosalynn regarded Mrs. Macdonald's letter, in reality he disturbed him far more than he cared to acknowledge. He sat for a long time ruminating over it, and then set off to Joseph Hume's office.

The room was empty when he entered it; but a newspaper, recently opened, was lying on the table. Rosalynn, with a sigh of disgust, flung himself into a chair to wait for his lawyer's return, which his confidential clerk assured him would not be long delayed; and took up the paper to while away the time of waiting. Presently he flung it down again with an expression of disgust and anger.

"Again!" he muttered. "Why the deuce do people take such an interest in my affairs? These society papers, as they call themselves, written by hangers-on to the skirts of the fashionable world, and whose news is supplied to them by servants, coveys-droppers, and impetuous dependents, are the very curse of one's life. What will the widow say if she reads this? Names are suppressed, but it's clear enough who it meant. I'd like to know who sent *Gossip* this precious paragraph, and he read once again the following:—  
"We learn that the match between a certain well-known Earl, of strong sporting proclivities, and a young lady, until lately believed to be an heiress and the possessor of a large estate in the south of England, is broken off. The reasons are not far to seek!"

"She's sharp. She'll put two and two together, and the person who told her—no—by Jove, I'm a fool! Armada knows nothing of English society. I doubt if she will recognise me in this unless someone enlightens her. Fortunately, she's kept very much to herself since she's been in this country, and hasn't gone in for society at any price as most rich Americans do. The impertinence of paragraphs like these, though, is unbearable.

Hillo! Home!" as Mr. Joseph Hume entered, "do you see this?"

"And he held up the paper.  
"Time—oh! say—can't it let you alone, you see; but that was to be expected—dull season—glad to get something to fill up their paper. He, ha! don't look so grim over it, Roderick. By Jove! I never thought you were so skin-shinned."

"Thin-skinned he hanged!" replied Rosalynn, moodily, and with an angry flash from his cold grey eyes. "I'm pretty well seasoned to criticism; but I don't want a paragraph like this to come to the eyes of a certain lady, you understand!"

"Ah! no—I suppose not; but she wouldn't be likely to fix it on you, you see," replied Hume, carelessly. "Is it all right in that quarter, Roderick? Abrams and Moss are getting fidgety; it's time I was able to tell them something."

"Oh! tell them anything you like. The thing will certainly come off, you've my word for that," answered Rosalynn, calmly. "I'm going down to Brighton to-morrow, and when I come back I shall be able to inform Abrams and Moss of the exact date on which I shall be able to call the fair widow, and her cheeks mine. Those hungry wolves, how I hate 'em!"

"They're growling pretty loudly for your blood just now," returned Hume, gravely. "It's all I can do to keep them in hand, Roderick; glad to hear you will be able to give me some good news for them ere long. Then there's the Grant and Davis—"

And he ran over a long list of names, and for an hour or so remained deep in consultation with Rosalynn, during which time Armada's fortune was talked over, reckoned up, and a great part of it apportioned to those hungry wolves, who, according to Mr. Hume, were thirsting for the blood of his noble client—in other words, for the money they had lent him at a ruinous interest, and which of late they had begun to fear was lost to them.

That evening Jim Rogers, in the reading-room at the Lambeth, took up the same number of *Gossip* that Rosalynn had seen at Home's office, and, casting his eyes carelessly over it, had them arrested by the paragraph that had so much disturbed his lordship.

His sad, listless face became suddenly eager and agitated as he read. Was it possible that Armada could be the young heiress alluded to, and that Rosalynn had, as he had hoped, broken off his engagement with her, being aware that her claims to the Palliser estate were not valid?

"Can you tell me—do you know at all to whom this paragraph refers?" he asked, in trembling tones, of a certain military man, a great student of papers of the class to which the *Gossip* belonged, and who, as Jim was aware, was considered to be an authority on matters connected with the upper ten by his companions.

"That, sir?" he replied. "A shabby-voiled paragraph, surely. He who runs may read between the lines. The lady referred to is, no doubt, Miss Danvers, a lovely girl, and—"

"And the man Lord Rosalynn!" cried Jim. "Undoubtedly—a personal friend of mine, sir—know 'em both, in fact. Miss Danvers, and her Aunt Mrs.—Lady Vane, I mean—left London for the Continent last week, and Rosalynn, they say, is in Ireland. A sad affair, sir—heart's broken, poor girl. I don't think much of the fellow who brought about all this trouble; but human nature is human nature, and I suppose one could not expect a man to resign his birthright, even to save the heart of the loveliest creature in England from breaking."

Jim Rogers hardly heard the last part of Captain Hill's long-winded speech. His beam was in a tumult, his brain whirled with excitement. Could it be true? How could he ascertain?



"At an early hour the next day he was with his friend, Mr. Howard."

"Well, Jim, what is it?" asked Mr. Howard with a knowing twinkle in his eye.

"Is it true? Ah, you know what I mean—that fellow, Rossallyn. Is it true the match between him and Miss Danvers is broken off?" cried Jim.

"Don't worry, my dear boy," replied Mr. Howard, with an amused smile, "considering where you have passed the best part of the last few days, I should have thought you would have been able to give me all the latest information on that subject."

"But I know nothing," cried Jim. "All I have heard is in the *Gossip*, and of course it may be a lie—a false report."

"Hum! you're right not to put faith in what you read in papers of that kind certainly," replied Mr. Howard; "but I believe *Gossip* is right for once, and that what I told you has come true."

"What! she is saved!"—cried Jim, eagerly.

"That she will never be the wife of Lord Rossallyn. I learn on good authority he has broken off the engagement, on some pretence or other—of course," answered Howard.

"Thank Heaven!" cried Jim. "Now then, Howard, you know what we have got to do."

"Bring the case to an end as soon as possible, I suppose? It's been dragging on a tolerably long time in its first stage," replied Howard, calmly.

"Bring the case to an end, of course. Oh! how that fellow will grind his teeth with rage when he finds that after all the Palliser estate are Nella's and—"

"Are Miss Danvers's—but they are not. What do you mean, Jim Rogers, are you crazy?" cried Howard.

"You don't imagine," said Jim, gravely, rising from his seat and standing very erect and defiant before Howard, "you can't suppose, my dear fellow, that now the marriage between Miss Danvers and Rossallyn is broken off I shall follow up my claim to the Palliser property?"

"I—I thought," began Howard, but Jim continued, enthusiastically—

"No, no, Howard, I shall not move another step in the matter now. I shall do just what I said I should in the letter I wrote you before I knew of this engagement. I shall drop all claim to the property and go back to Australia. What! do I mean it? Yes, most certainly I do. Is it possible I could rob the girl I love so dearly, Howard? No, if I had five times the amount of the Palliser estates to squander I would sacrifice them for her sake. Let her keep all, let it be as if I had never come over to England. I give up all to her."

"Young man," said Mr. Howard to Jim, grasping him by the hand and shaking it heartily, "let me tell you, a friend that I honour you for your generosity and your noble spirit; but, that as your legal adviser, I am bound to tell you that I look upon your conduct as the greatest folly—mere madness in fact. But is there no other way of settling it?"

## CHAPTER XVII.

### "HIS REWARD!"

"It's very odd, I can't make Mr. Parker out, Aunt Della," said Nella, a fortnight after Jim's visit to Mr. Howard at which he had expressed his determination to give up the Palliser property to his cousin. "I thought that by this time something would have been decided. Mr. Parker hesitated and stammered and looked so strange when I spoke to him about it yesterday that I felt quite puzzled."

"Indeed," said Lady Vane, with a smile. "You seem very anxious to get rid of your property, Nella?"

"Yes, I am anxious," she replied impatiently. "I hate to be kept in uncertainty—not that there is any uncertainty, I sup-

pose?—but with things as they are I hate hanging on here, feeling that any day I may be obliged to turn out—"

"And, when you are turned out, what do you mean to do, Nella?" asked Lady Vane, quietly.

Nella looked at her reproachfully and turned pale. Her words gave her a cruel shock, not that she did not know that she would be almost absolutely penniless when Jim Rogers's claim to his grandfather's property was established, but she had not expected Aunt Della to remind her in such a calm, cold-blooded way of the fact, nor to ask so coolly what she intended to do!

"I don't know, aunt," she said, in a pained voice. "I—I shall have to become a companion or governess I suppose, I don't know of anything else I could do."

"No, a miserable sort of life though," returned Lady Vane, "I don't think you need be in any hurry to take it up. By-the-way, is Mr. Rogers coming here to-day?"

"I—I hardly know," said Nella, with a little blush, "very likely, I should say. Ah! when he does come I will ask him what is the cause of all this delay, perhaps they are going to advise me to give up the estates without more ado. I'm sure I am willing to do so—to do anything they advise, and settle the affair amicably out of court, as they say."

"I am sure it would be the best thing to settle it amicably," replied Lady Vane. "It could be done I'm sure. Promise me, Nella, if Mr. Rogers has any compromise to propose, if he suggests any course, you will listen to him favourably. He is so good and just and reliable I'm sure you may depend on all he says, and take his advice, though he is your opponent in the matter."

"Yes, I am sure any advice Mr. Rogers gave me would be for the best," replied Nella, thoughtfully. "As you say, Aunt Della, he is thoroughly trustworthy and honest. Yes, I'll speak to him if he comes here to-day. I—I was not at all satisfied with Mr. Parker's manner to-day, he seemed to be hiding something from me."

Half-an-hour later Lady Vane, after glancing at the clock, declared herself extraordinarily sleepy, and, yawning ostentatiously, betook herself to her dressing-room, where she announced she intended to take a nap.

Hardly had she left the drawing-room when the door opened, and Jim Rogers was announced. Nella rose with alacrity to meet him, and accosted him eagerly.

"I am so glad to see you, Mr. Rogers," she said, smiling. "I—I want particularly to speak to you."

"Do you?" he said, holding her little hand for an instant in his before he released it. "Strangely enough, I wanted particularly to speak to you, Miss Danvers."

He looked earnestly into Nella's eyes as he spoke, but there was no change in hers to make him imagine that she had divined on what subject he wished to speak to her.

"It is about this law suit, Mr. Rogers," went on Nella, with an uneasy blush. "I can't quite understand—the law's delays are proverbial, of course, but I don't quite understand why this business should take so long. I understood some time ago from Mr. Parker that it would be settled before—"

"It might be settled very easily, very quickly, if you wished," said Jim.

"Might it? then I assure you I do wish it. This case of things is very unpleasant to all concerned—at least, I know it is to me. I long to have done with it. How do you propose to bring things to a conclusion, Mr. Rogers?"

Nella spoke quite gaily, and in the friendliest of voices, as if she were talking indeed of some very ordinary matter, not of one involving the right to many thousands of pounds.

"Aunt Della," she went on, as Jim did not answer, "knows I am going to ask your advice on this, and told me she was sure I could not consult a better person. Now, Mr.

Rogers, what do you propose? An amicable arrangement, eh?"

"Yes," he returned, in a strange, stifled voice, "an amicable arrangement, if you will but consent!"

He looked at her eagerly, and there was something in his eyes that startled Nella, and her own dropped.

"Will you explain?" she faltered. "If you advise it—if it is possible—you may be sure—"

"May I explain—really?" he cried. "Oh! if you will only listen to me, Miss Danvers, this horrid suit may be brought to a happy issue indeed. However, whether you will listen to me or not—"

"But," faltered Nella, "I am listening, Mr. Rogers; I am anxious to learn—"

"Cannot you guess?" he cried. "Nella, remember what I said to you at Brighton that day I came down, after we discovered in what relation we stood to each other. I told you then, not knowing that your word was pledged, that I loved you; and I tell you again now, that I love you, love you more even than I did then. Nay, you must listen to all I have to say. I must tell you fully what I had intended to tell you then. Sit down again, I beg, and, when you have heard all, then give me my answer."

Nella had risen and was standing pale and trembling before him; but at his words she fell back again into her seat, and he proceeded.

"When I came down to see you at Brighton that day, Miss Danvers, I came with the intention of telling you two things—first that I loved you, loved you more dearly, more deeply than I had ever believed it possible to love, and to ask you to be my wife. If you accepted me, I knew that all difficulty regarding my—our grandfather's estate was at an end; and if not, I had made up my mind to withdraw my claim to it—to return to Australia and to leave you in possession of what you had always believed to be yours, and what was and is in fact, though not in law, more yours than mine. Yes, why do you start? Why do you look so astonished? What! tears, Nella! What have I said to make you weep? I loved you; could I deal you such a blow—could I rob you of all you held dearest? No, I could not. From the moment I learnt you were the possessor of the Palliser property, my mind was made up. I would retire and take no more steps towards establishing my identity. But—"

and he paused.

She looked at him inquiringly.

"But," he continued slowly, "you told me something—something I had never suspected, namely, that you were engaged—and to Lord Rossallyn."

Nella inclined her head in assent.

"Miss Danvers," went on Jim, very earnestly, "I vow to you that had I learnt you were engaged to some good fellow—a man I knew and felt would have made you happy. I would not have changed my resolve. I would have gone away—hidden myself in the bush—and left the property in your hands. But I knew Rossallyn by repute, and I could not do it."

Nella had grown very white, and her head dropped on her breast, whilst a blush of shame spread over her face.

"You must despise me," she faltered. "I—I was easily duped."

"Rossallyn was a villain, I knew that much," went on Jim, as if he had not heard her; "I knew he was marrying you for your money, and—but, oh! perhaps—perhaps you will hate me if I tell you all."

And he paused and looked anxiously at her.

"Well, I must tell the truth," he continued. "I made up my mind that if I could I would save you from this marriage. I knew Rossallyn was a ruined man, that money was all he wanted. How you will ask. I heard it from his own lips. Ah! you start, but it was by chance; and not till you told me you were the

girl he was to marry did I understand to whom he had referred when I overheard his heartless, cynical, boasting speech. Ah! the pain it gave me to learn it was you—you whom I loved and worshipped and honoured. Yes, I knew that if you lost your wealth you would be saved from a life of misery and degradation such as you could have no idea of, and I went away from you without a word more. But I have saved you, Nella. You may—you must, perhaps—hate me for it now, but some day you will forgive me, and bless me for it."

He stopped and looked at her with hungry, loving eyes.

"Say one word," he begged, hopelessly. "Say you do not hate me, that I have not bought victory too dearly, that I did not break your heart."

Nella lifted her head at first proudly, then it sank again as if bowed down with shame.

"No, no," she said, "my heart is not broken, and—and I do thank you. I thank you with all my heart, cousin, for what you did for me."

A sudden rush of joy almost overpowered poor Jim. Thank God, he had not harmed her; he had saved her, and would have nothing to reproach himself with. Even if she bade him leave her, bade him go back to Australia, he could always look back with satisfaction to the past, and know that he had saved the woman he loved from life-long misery, and left her heart whole.

There was a long pause, then Nella spoke.

"I do not know how I can ever show you how grateful I am to you for your kindness," she said, in a low, trembling voice. "I did not deserve to be saved. It was my vanity and love of the world that led me to engage myself to Rossallyn far more than any—any regard I had for him. Oh! I have been well punished. The world I thought so much of, looks at me with scorn now, thrown aside—jilted as I have been, poor as I am instead of rich—"

"Ah! do not say that," cried Jim. "Oh! have you not understood me? Must I tell you again that unless you consent to be my wife, unless you can love me, I—"

"Hush!" she said, gently. "Think who you are speaking to—"

"I know," said poor Jim, humbly, misunderstanding her meaning. "I know I am speaking to one who in many respects is far above me. I am but a rough Australian, not worthy of you, but yet—"

"Oh! not that," she cried. "It is I who am not worthy of a good man's love. Your goodness, your generosity has overpowered me, Mr. Rogers. I do not deserve your regard. Forget me, for we can never be anything to each other but friends."

"Do not say so," he pleaded. "Nella, all the love and devotion of my heart is yours. My whole life shall be devoted to making yours happy if you will but be mine."

"It cannot be," she repeated, sadly. "Do not press me, do not urge me. It is impossible," and turning away, Nella burst into tears.

Poor Jim Rogers was terribly distressed. He knelt down beside her, and strove as a brother might to calm and soothe her grief.

"Don't cry. Oh! what have I said to make you so unhappy?" he said, wretchedly. "I wish I had gone away and said nothing. Of course you don't care for me. Why should you?—a rough, coarse fellow from the wilds of Australia, without refinement, without tact or good manners. I was a fool to think you could. There, I will never speak of it again. Only cheer up, I can't bear to see you cry; and we will be friends, won't we, till I am gone?"

"Gone! what do you mean?" said Nella, raising her tear-stained face from her hands. "Where are you going?"

"Back to Australia," he replied.

"And the property?" she said, with a gasp. "We must settle about that. You said you had an amiable settlement to propose."

"And I have proposed it and you have declined," he returned, with a sad smile. "Now there is only one thing to be done."

"Yes—not to settle it in court, though. I shall withdraw, give up," she returned, with a sigh.

"Certainly not. It will never come into court," he answered, wearily. "You are saved. It was to save you I claimed the property. It is yours, and will remain yours. I shall take no further steps to make it mine."

"But," cried Nella, "I cannot consent to that. I will not keep it, I will not accept it from you."

"There is no question of accepting it," he returned, quietly. "It is yours, and if I do not claim it, yours it will remain."

"I cannot consent to be under such an obligation to you," cried Nella. "I will not take what is not mine."

"You will have to keep what you have got. If you could have loved me, I would have shared it with you gladly; but I will not rob you of it. What do I want with it? I have enough of my own, and can make more. I shall return to Australia in a week or two," he replied.

"And—and leave—us," she faltered.

"That must be," he answered. "It will be a wrench, but it is my fate. I must bear it as best I can."

She looked at him steadily as if about to speak, when the door opened, and Lady Vane, with a look of expectancy in her eyes, entered.

"Dear Nella, I have left you a long time alone," she said. "What! Mr. Rogers, you here!"

"Yes, Lady Vane," he said, trying to speak cheerfully. "I was just wishing Miss Danvers good-bye. I shall sail for Australia very shortly!"

Lady Vane sank back with a groan.

"And—the property—your—" she began. "Miss Danvers will explain to you about that," he replied.

"Indeed you are mistaken, I shall never—" began Nella.

But before she could finish the sentence Jim Rogers had seized her hand, pressed it to his lips, and rushed from the room.

"You have refused him—sent him away—that good fellow! Oh, Nella! Nella! you are too foolish!" cried Lady Vane.

"Yes," she replied, "you need not tell me I am a fool, Aunt Della, I know it!"

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### A STORMY INTERVIEW.

OUTWARDLY calm, as polished and suave in manner as usual, but inwardly furious with Amanda and with her letter, Lord Rossallyn was about to set out on his way to Brighton next day, when, as he was leaving his club, a carriage drove quickly up and stopped at the door as he descended the steps into the street.

In it was seated a small, pretty, and exceedingly gaily-dressed lady, who kissed her daintily-gloved hand to Rossallyn, and beckoned him to her side.

"Now who the deuce is she?" thought Rossallyn, a puzzled look visible for one half second in his eyes, and then in another moment he was beside the carriage, the name of its occupant his own.

"Mrs. Maddison," he said, "this is delightful. I did not know you were in town."

And he shook Mrs. Clara Maddison's hand warmly.

"We came over last week from Nice. I've been hoping to meet you; but London is so empty, everyone out of town. We go to Scarborough very soon. Bye the way," and she looked at him archly. "I've just been calling on a dear friend of yours."

"Indeed!" he replied, sweetly; "and what evil did my dear friend say of me behind my back, Mrs. Maddison?"

"Oh, for shame, you sarcastic man!" she

cried, affectedly, bowing to a group of compatriotes who happened to pass, and feeling delighted to be seen by them in conversation with a man of Rossallyn's notoriety. "She—your friend would never speak ill of you, I feel sure."

"She! It was a woman then," he said, with a smile.

"Certainly. Should I call on a gentleman?" laughed Mrs. Maddison.

"Forgive me, of course not. And she did not abuse me? Wonderful! How unlike the common run of friends. Who is this paragon? what did she say of me? Tell me quickly, that I may cultivate her friendship, and—"

"That you will do, no doubt," replied Mrs. Maddison; "but as I did not see her—"

"Ah! that accounts for it all. I'm disappointed. I believed I had at last found a true friend," he said, in a tone of mock regret. "Well, I am starting to pay a visit to a mutual friend, Mrs. Maddison, to Mrs. Macdonald."

"Really now! why it's from Mrs. Macdonald's I've just come," she answered.

"From Aman—from Mrs. Macdonald's?" said Lord Rossallyn, in surprise.

"Yes; what made her take rooms in such an out-of-the-way place, Lord Rossallyn? You should insist on her moving. Melville-square! whoever heard of it!"

"You are right," said Lord Rossallyn, perfectly coolly, and without betraying any concern, though he had heard for the first time of Amanda's presence in town. "Six, Melville-square is on the wrong side of the square, too—"

"Nineteen, you mean—not six, my dear Lord Rossallyn," she interrupted, raising her voice as she observed other acquaintances passing.

"Ah! of course, I was confounding her number with Lady Hartland's, in Mansfield-place. Nineteen—it's not on the best side of the square, even," he answered. "Well, I hope she'll not be out when I get there."

"No fear of that. She'll be at home to you, no doubt," laughed Mrs. Maddison.

"Am I," and she dropped her voice to a confidential whisper, "am I to—do congratulate you, Lord Rossallyn, ay?"

"Hum! I think—if you like you may," he answered with a smile, that fully conveyed to Mrs. Maddison, as he intended it should, that a perfect understanding existed between him and Amanda.

"Ah! I thought so—well! I won't be so cruel as to keep you any longer from her, Lord Rossallyn. I'm so delighted—good-bye!"

And she drove on to the Langham Hotel to impart the news she had just heard to various friends.

"Now, I wonder at Amanda," she said to herself as she turned into Regent-street. "she's been all along set on that man; but I shouldn't care to accept one who'd just broken off with a girl because she'd lost her money—would make me feel low down and mean-like! but Amanda will be a Countess," and Clara Maddison sighed, "a Countess! and he's very handsome, too. I was always a bit afraid of him myself. I could never quite understand that mocking way of his. However, she knows her own mind, I suppose. She's old enough too, anyway."

Lord Rossallyn hurried away as soon as Mrs. Maddison released him, and jumped into the first hansom he met.

"Nineteen, Melville-square," he said, in a harsh quick voice, "and drive quickly."

He did not like this sudden move on Amanda's part. It looked as if her mind were made up, and that she seriously wished to avoid him; and he shivered as he thought of what the result of a breakdown in his designs on Mrs. Macdonald would be to him. He would be a bankrupt—a beggar—a ruined man—undone for evermore if she refused him.

"Hiding evidently! How did that feather-brained chatter-box—bless her long tongue for



once, though—that Maddison woman, know that she was here? Fange! What a quarter—what a house!" he added, as they turned through a narrow street into a dingy square, and the cab drew up at No. 19.

"Mrs. Macdonald at home?"

"No; Mrs. Macdonald is out," said the shabby servant, who opened the door.

"No, she's not out. I saw her at the window," replied Lord Rossalyn, coolly slipping a coin into the servant's hand. "Which room—tell me?"

"First floor drawing-room," whispered the girl, "you'll find her there."

And he ran quickly up-stairs.

"I'm in for it, but he's a gentleman," she said, as she looked with delight at the shining sovereign Lord Rossalyn had given her. "What's up, I wonder? Is it Mrs. M. or the foreign young lady? I thought there was something queer when such as they took rooms with such as we in this here outlandish part."

Amanda was seated alone in the shabby drawing-room. She had just completed a long and doleful letter to Silas Brockfield, confessing to him that he had been right in his estimate of Lord Rossalyn—that he was a villain—worse far than even Silas had supposed, reproaching herself for her folly in ever having believed in him and, showing plainly that she was lonely, miserably and terribly dissatisfied with herself and all she had done.

Tessa as usual, was keeping in the background; her husband's sudden reappearance, and the knowledge that at any moment he might discover their place of concealment, made her more than even anxious to keep hidden. In a few days at the most Giovanni would be with them; till then, nothing should induce her to quit her seclusion!

Mrs. Macdonald started violently, and her eyes flashed fire as Lord Rossalyn entered.

"I have found you, you see," he said, gently. "My darling, did you think you could hide yourself from me? that I should rest till I had found you?"

"Lord Rossalyn, after my letter to you," she began, "I wonder how you dare—yes—how you dare—"

"Ah! that letter, that cruel, foolish letter," he interrupted, reproachfully. "I think I have a right to be a little angry with you—if it were possible for me to be angry with you. There are two sides to every story, Amanda; you should have heard mine before running away from me—before writing to me. You have done me a great wrong, my dear. Did you really believe—"

"A wrong! I have done you no wrong—all I asserted is true—true. I know and can prove it," cried Amanda, indignantly, her handsome face glowing with scorn. "Your presence here is an insult to me, Lord Rossalyn. Leave me! Have you no sense of shame! Thank Heaven I found out in time."

And she shuddered.

Lord Rossalyn smiled patiently.

"Your indignation does you credit it shows me, that, as any good woman would, you feel what a wrong, what an insult my love would be, if what you believe, what evidently some enemy has told you, were true—"

"True! you know it is true. Can you dare deny it?" cried Amanda, her large dark eyes flashing dangerously. "It is of no use, Lord Rossalyn; I know all. The game is played out—it is useless to pursue it further."

"But be reasonable," he returned, quite calmly and gently, spite of her contempt and anger; "you are wrong, I do dare to deny that I am married."

She turned from him almost speechless with disgust.

"Oh! it is too much," she said, in a low voice, "too much to try still to—"

"I do not try to deceive you," he went on earnestly. "Think for a moment. Is it likely that I—a man well-known, whose past history is easy to rake up, should anyone desire to do it, whose secrets, if I have

secrets, are easy to discover—is it likely that I should dare dream of committing the crime you accuse me of seeking to perpetrate? Bigamy is no light offence, and one which I, my dear, would under no circumstances dream of committing."

"And yet," she said, slowly, raising her eyes to his proudly, "you asked me to become your wife."

"I did so, because I love you, and because I am not married. Listen, you sturdy unbeliever," he continued, in a half-mocking, half-caressing tone, as if he were talking to a naughty, unreasonable child. "I will confess to you the extent of my crimes, and believe me," and he spoke more gravely, "had you accepted me wholly, fully, and frankly the other day, I should have told you this at once. I, like you, have been married, but I am a widower—a free man now—my wife is dead."

He spoke with such evident sincerity, with such evident belief of the truth of his own words, that Amanda for an instant was staggered.

"Your wife is dead?" she said, "you believe that?"

"My wife is dead most certainly. I know it, and can prove it," he answered. "A year ago I would have asked you to be mine, but I could not, much as I longed to do so; but now I tell you I am free, as free as you are yourself."

"It is not so—it cannot be; you are deceiving me!" cried Mrs. Macdonald. "I know she lives!"

"Someone has been trying to deceive you, but not me," he replied, firmly. "Someone who has an object in view, doubtless; someone who bears me a grudge, and has seized on an opportunity of gratifying it. I can prove it to you beyond all manner of doubt. See here! read this, O most cruel and hardest to convince of women, and own you have done me a wrong."

He drew a paper from his breast pocket as he spoke, and held it out to her.

"This will prove to you the truth of my words, and that I am not the criminal you seem to think me," he said, proudly.

Amanda took the paper from his hand, and mechanically began to read it. It was the same paper he had read over so carefully after leaving Home's office, and which he had received in the little inn at Glasgow from his foreign acquaintance, and for which he had given the man a pocket-book filled with bank-notes, and a heavy rouleau of golden coins—the certificate of the death of Theresa Calvert, Lady Rossalyn, on twenty-fifth of June of that year.

Amanda's face grew white and frozen with horror as she read.

"You are wrong—wrong. If you are not trying to deceive me, you have been deceived," she faltered.

He smiled again.

"You are harder to convince than even I thought possible," he said. "I tell you, I saw—"

"And I tell you," she returned, solemnly, "that your wife still lives. Ah!" and she made a quick, shuddering gesture of repulsion. "I see it all plainly! What price did you pay for this lying document? Where is the wretch who—"

Rossalyn's face was suddenly convulsed with a terrible expression of mingled rage and fear.

"What are you saying, what do you dare insinuate?" he cried, fiercely, his self-restraint giving way, his smooth, polished manner vanishing, and his true nature showing itself. "Of what are you accusing me, woman? Nay" (and he tried to calm himself), "you are too perverse, you try me beyond all bearing. Tell me what accusation is this you bring against me?"

She looked at him calmly and defiantly, without a trace of fear in her haughty, beautiful face.

"I hesitate to formulate an accusation against you, Lord Rossalyn," she said slowly;

"if I did, it would be one so terrible, so monstrous, so almost incredible, that I am loth to speak it. But this I tell you: you have been duped, deceived, outwitted, if indeed you believe what you have told me—your wife still lives!"

He laughed in angry scorn.

"She still lives," continued Mrs. Macdonald, earnestly, "and it was I who saved her life—I who saved her from the most terrible of deaths."

"She lives! I owe her preservation to you!" he cried sarcastically. "A heavy debt! Where is she then?"

"Tessa Vasari is—" began Mrs. Macdonald; but a sudden change in Lord Rossalyn's scornful face stopped her, and arrested the words on her lips.

He had turned livid, and his piercing steel-grey eyes were fixed with a blank horrified stare, on something at the other extremity of the apartment.

Mrs. Macdonald turned in the direction in which they were fixed; and there, pale and white, but perfectly calm and collected, stood Tessa, her eyes meeting his unflinchingly.

"Tessa—Tessa Vasari—my wife!" he muttered. "Then, by Heaven! that brute Cassone is a double-dyed villain; he duped me."

There was a pause. Tessa did not stir, she seemed turned to stone. Then suddenly, her eyes filled with tears and with a cry, she rushed to Mrs. Macdonald and threw her arms about her.

For Lord Rossalyn—all the terror had gone from his face, which, though pale, had assumed its wonted scornful carelessness of expression—had turned aside, and, with a mocking little laugh, picked up the certificate Amanda had let drop, and put it away again into his pocket.

"My dear Mrs. Macdonald," he said, reproachfully, yet sneeringly, "you must really forgive me, but it is you who have been victimised. This person—who you call Tessa Vasari—was never my wife."

And again the odious, mocking laugh, broke from his lips.

(To be continued)

THE Bank of England's doors are now so finely balanced that a clerk, by pressing a knob under his desk, can close the outer doors instantly, and they cannot be opened again except by special process. This is done to prevent the daring and ingenious predatory classes of the great metropolis from robbing the famous institution.

If it were possible to rise above the atmosphere which surrounds the earth, the sun would look like a sharply defined ball of fire, while everything else would be wrapped in total darkness. There could be no diffusion of light without an atmosphere or some similar medium for the sun's rays to act upon.

An electric stove has been invented by a machinist in Rouen, France. It will cook a first-class dinner for ten persons in four-fifths of the time required by a wood or coal fire, and the cost is only five sous, five cents, for the materials which generate the heat. The stove can be sold for twenty-five francs, or five dollars. Housekeepers will want this stove, as it makes no ashes, can be heated in three minutes, and the heat supply detached in a moment.

It is well known that horses can hear deep sounds which men cannot. For days previous to the earthquake in the Riviera the horses there showed every symptom of abject fear, which continued without any change of character till the fury of the convulsion broke forth. But not till a few seconds before the earth began to quake did human beings hear any sounds, while it is extremely probable that the horses heard the subterranean noises during the two or three preceding days.

## FACETIE.

One of the most difficult things to do is to make a dimple of a wrinkle.

The gentleman is solid mahogany, the fashionable man is only veneer.

"So dark, and yet so light!" as the man said when he looked at his new ton of coal.

A young Benedick says, "Man leads woman to the altar, and here is leadership ends."

There are two places where it requires an effort to keep one's balance—on the ice and at the bank.

Doctor: "Well, how do you feel to-day?" Patient: "I feel as if I had been dead a week."

"How, eh?" "No, I'm that distinguished-looking lady's husband."

"Waiter, have you seen my hat? A new one—" "You are too late, sir; the best ones have been gone for more than an hour."

"Pa," said a little fellow to his unhappily father, "your chin looks like the wheel in the musical box."

Orpheus was a musician, whose music had power to draw rocks, etc. towards him. The modern street musician has the same power.

Disappointment first comes in life to the baby, who has a horn given to him for a present and then finds he hasn't wind enough to blow it.

Maud (displaying her new engagement ring): "Don't you admire George's taste?" Ethel (a little disappointed): "Oh, immensely—in rings."

AN INEVITABLE CONCLUSION.—Brown: "I say, Jones, did you hear about Smith having a fit?" Jones: "No. A fit? He must have changed his tailor then!"

"Are any of the colours discernible to the touch?" asked the school teacher. "I have often felt blue," replied the boy at the head of the class.

The man without a country lives in pitiable estate, but he isn't in it for friendliness with the man who is learning to play the cornet.

"You say you are a good washer and ironer. How do you tell when the irons are too hot?" How? By smelling the burning linen, mum, of course. What's my nose for?"

It is not always polite to tell a man what you think of him. It is safer to tell it to somebody else, and it is just as effective in most instances.

"I NEVER use soap on my hands," said a well-dressed man to a friend; "you wouldn't believe it, to look at me, would you?" "Indeed I should," was the candid reply.

He (after the ceremony concluding a difficult engagement): "All's well that ends well, darling." She (spontaneously): "It's only beginning."

MISS CHINER: "Oh, I'm so fond of the violet! I think it is the most modest flower that grows." Spigot: "You forget the pink of propriety, Miss Chinner."

OLDBY: "Honesty, my boy, is the best policy!" Newman: "Ah, yes; that policy lapsed some time ago—some time ago, old fellow."

Mrs. O'BULL: "This is the seventh night you've come home in the morning. The next time you go out, Mr. O.B., you'll stay at home and open the door for yourself."

VISITOR: "I hear your new preacher is a man of indomitable will and wonderful energy." Hostess: "Indeed he is. He has started in to convert the choir."

GAMBLER: "Have a game of poker, sir?" Traveller: "Thank you. I beg to be excused." "Perhaps you object to games of chance?" "Not at all. What I object to is playing a game in which I have no chance."

"I THINK it is very strange that your friend Dobbs never married." "Oh, you don't know Dobbs. He isn't half such a fool as he looks," replied her husband.

We are none of us perfect in this world, but a good many of us look complacently at ourselves in the glass sometimes, and cheerfully think that we are pretty near it.

FIGGS: "There is one thing about a glass club that I never could understand." Diggs: "What was that?" Figgs: "Where the glass came in."

"WHAT building is that?" asked a stranger of a boy, pointing to a school-house. "That?" said the boy. "Why that is a tannery." And he feelingly rubbed his back as he passed on.

"Why are you so foolish as to have that old book rebound when there is really only a remnant of its left?" "That's is. I am going to have it bound over to keep the piece."

AN APPROPRIATE KEY.—Band master: "Quick! We must play 'Hail to the Chief.' Do you all know it?" New performer (timidly): "What key is it in?" Band Master: "A major general's."

"That song always moves me," said young Mr. Doolley, as Miss Amy rose from the piano at eleven P.M. "How glad I am I sang it," replied Amy, with a well-bred glance at the clock.

"Is it considered an honour to be sent out as a missionary?" "Yes. Why?" "I was only wondering," said Mrs. Vealy; "my husband's congregation are unanimously desirous that he shall go."

A BACHELOR upon reading that "two lovers will sit up all night with one chair in the room," said it could not be done unless one of them sat on the floor. Such ignorance is painful.

CUSTOMER (in barber's chair): "So you haven't heard V. Tamper, the world-famous pianist." Barber: "Now. Does pianist's neffer batonise me, an' as I neffer batonise dem."

HUSBAND: "What a splendid dinner you have to-night." Wife (complacently): "Yes, dear, I thought it would please you." Husband: "Was kind of a dress are you thinking of getting?"

FIRST English sparrow: "The legislatures are offering rewards for our heads. Aren't you scared?" Second English Sparrow: "No, Duban's worry until they call us game and pass laws to protect us."

Mrs. DE FASHION: "Where's the morning paper?" Mr. DE F: "What on earth do you want with the morning paper?" Mrs. DE Fashion: "I wish to see if the opera we heard last night was good or bad."

AGITATOR: "I tell you this eight-hour work day is going to do a lot of good to the masses of unemployed people. By the way, Sarah, is supper ready?" Agitator's wife: "No; my eight hours were up at half-past five to-day."

Mrs. MUSICMAD: "Doctor, why is it that all the great pianists have such long bushy hair?" Prof. SAVAGE (reflectively): "I presume it is to keep off the flies while they are performing."

The women of the church raised money to educate a young man for the ministry. When he had finished at the theological school the young divine returned to his native town, and preached his first sermon on the text, "Let your women keep silence in the churches."

"SHALL we marry, darling, or shall we not?" was the short and witty line an ardent lover despatched to the idol of his heart. But where the strangeness of the matter came in, the girl replied: "I shall not! You can do as you please."

"SAL," cried the girl looking out of the upper window of a small grocery, and addressing another girl, who was trying to enter at the front door, "we've all been to camp-meeting and got converted; so when you want milk on Sunday you'll have to come round to the back door."

"THE idea," she said, as they paused in the walk. "Just to think of it! Here I am a grandmother at thirty-eight. Don't you find it very hard to believe?" "I do," he said, simply; and then she looked at him very hard.

FRIEND: "I see that you are still giving vast sums to charity. If you keep on much longer you will have nothing to leave your relatives." Rich Man (who is weary of reading about will contests): "They can apply to the charities, you know."

FIRST Customer: "I wish to select a vase." Floor Walker: "Yes, madam. James, show the lady to the crockery department." Second Customer: "I wish to select a vase." Floor Walker: "Yes, madam. George, show the lady to the bric-a-brac department."

"What a man wants a woman to do something she does not want to do he blasters. 'You shall do it.' When a woman wants a man to do something against his will she never blasters. She simply says to herself, 'He's got to do it.' And he does it. It may be hours, weeks, months, or years, but he does it."

JONES: "I want to ask you a question." SMITH: "All right. Ask away." Jones: "I'm thinking of getting married again. Now you have been married three times; tell me which wife you like the most?" Smith: "You bite three sour apples, one after another, and then tell me which is the sweetest."

A FAMOUS French doctor and professor of medicine contended that every disease was attributable to a process of inflammation. On dissecting one of his patients and a trace of inflammation could be found. He explained the circumstances to his pupils as follows: "Gentlemen, you see that our mode of treatment was thoroughly effective. The patient is dead, but he died cured."

Mrs. D'AVENIO: "Oh, the awfullest thing has happened! Clara de Style, who never could design to look at any one in trade, has just discovered that the man she has married is a dry-goods clerk." Mrs. D'AVENIO: "Horror! I should think she might have found him out by his talk." Mrs. D'AVENIO: "That's just how the poor girl was deceived. He never seemed to know anything about anything, and she supposed of course he was a millionaire's son."

If Homer sometimes nods, why need ordinary mortals, one or more degrees removed, blush at a lapse of tongue? It was a party of cultivated people that stood before an ancient cathedral admiring its grandeur, which several centuries of existence had failed to dim. The noise of the cars in the immediate vicinity so annoyed one of the ladies of the party that she impulsively said, "I wonder why they built the cathedral so near the railroad!"

THERE is a good story told of a girl who married a drunken, lazy rascal. "Marty," said her mistress to her one day, "why do you want to leave me and get married?" "Please, ma'am," said the girl, "to rest my bones." Some time after the marriage her old mistress met her, and inquired: "Well, Marty, have you rested your bones?" "Yes, ma'am," was the rejoinder; "but they are my jawbones. The cupboard have fallen short?"

At one of the Parisian theatres there was a performance of *Cleopatra*. It charmed that the heroine's part was wretchedly performed, and when she was about to commit suicide, with the aid of the historic asp, the audience seemed to think that it was about time for the Egyptian coquette to close her career. On this occasion the asp was an ingenious mechanical contrivance, and as *Cleopatra* raised it to her bosom, the touching of a spring caused it to extend its forked tongue, and threateningly hiss. A hush of silence fell over the house, and a spectator in the orchestra audibly remarked, "That asp expresses my opinion."



## SOCIETY.

LORD AND LADY SALISBURY passed the Easter holidays on the Riviera, at La Bastide, their new villa near Beaulieu.

New sleeves are full on the shoulders rather than high, and are wrinkled down the length of the arm.

The Grand Duchess Sergide of Russia is so strikingly beautiful that she is known as "The Crowned Ophelia."

The Duchess of Connaught has felt the severity of the winter very much, her Royal Highness having had bad colds.

The Prince and Princess of Wales and the members of their family are already greatly, the better for their change of residence in the sunny South. Princess Maud is very much better.

The Queen intends placing very severe restrictions on the number and condition of persons to be presented at the two Drawing Rooms which will be held in May.

The girl of the period has another new bracelet. It consists of a satin ribbon, which is clasped about her fair arm and fastened with a magnificent gold buckle, as much bejewelled at the wearer can afford.

"TAKE DE VEAU" is the new Parisian shade for evening wear. It is of a yellowish-white tint. Many of the show-sticks have this shade as their foundation. It is also very effective in combination with darker shades.

The four-post bedstead, after being decried by sanitary enthusiasts and banished from sanely-furnished sleeping apartments, has suddenly reappeared, and will soon become the leading feature of the best bedrooms.

There is a library for women in Turin. The rooms are beautifully furnished, and the tables are covered with periodicals and newspapers from all quarters of the globe, while the shelves are filled with the best modern books.

One of the latest proofs of their deep affection for Princess May given by the Prince and Princess of Wales is, that, with kindly insistence, they have induced Her Highness to accept from them the diamond necklace and the travelling bag, which were to have been their presents to her under happier circumstances.

"FEMINICULTURE" is the latest of new-made words. It means, as the word indicates, everything pertaining to the culture of woman. Feminiculture originated in this way: "Let me introduce you to a friend who is interested in—in feminine matters; that is, in feminiculture—if I can coin a word," wrote a man who wished to introduce one woman who writes to another who writes.

In China hyperbole imparts a peculiarly quaint and racy flavour to social colloquy, for it inspires the well-bred Celestial not only to overstate the dignities and merits of the person with whom he is conversing, but to understate his own. Thus he will differentially ask after the health of his visitor's son and daughter, alluding to them respectively as "monument of wisdom" and "star of loveliness," and interrogated in turn about his own children, will reply apologetically, "My poor rat of a son and my squallid worm of a daughter still presume to breathe."

PROBABLY no physician ever died in London who had so many warm personal friends and so many bitter professional enemies as the late Sir Morell Mackenzie. He was a hard fighter, with all the courage of his convictions, and he had a faculty for winning the affection and confidence of his friends. Sir Morell, overwhelmed as he was with engagements to treat the greatest and wealthiest people in the land, never turned away the humblest and poorest sufferers who came to his door. He charged enormous fees to the rich. He would not accept money from the poor.

## STATISTICS.

The raven has been known to live 100 years. Twelve thousand people are engaged in making coaks in Spain.

The docks at Liverpool will hold about 20,000 vessels of ordinary dimensions.

It is supposed that there are at least 17,000,000 comets in the solar system.

Of the 288 millions who constitute the population of India, 211 millions are Hindoos (including Sikhs, Jains, Brahmins, and Aryans), 7 millions are Buddhists, 9.1-3 millions are "Animists," or aboriginal or forest tribes, and 57.1-3 millions are Mahomedans. There are only 89,887 Parsees, the remnant of the great people almost exterminated by the Arabs, and 17,180 Jews.

## GEMS.

He that is little in his own eyes, will not be troubled to be thought so in others.

TRICKS and treachery are the practice of fools that have not wit enough to be honest.

Every noble life leaves the fibre of it interwoven for ever in the work of the world.

To be beaten but not broken; to be victorious, but not vainglorious; to strive and contend for the prize, and to win it honestly or lose it cheerfully; to use every power in the race, and yet never to wear an undue advantage or win an unlawful mastery—verily, in all this there are training and testing of character which search it to the very roots; and this is a result which is worth all that it costs us.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

CANDY.—One pound white sugar, quarter teaspoon cream of tartar, one teaspoon water, two ounces butter. Boil water and sugar for about ten minutes, then add the butter and boil till a little put in cold water soon gets hard, then pour out on a buttered dish, and when nearly cold tuck into squares. To make the candy red put a few drops of cochineal or carmine in it.

SARDINES AND CHEESE.—Warm some sardines in oil from the tin, adding to them pepper, salt, and a little lemon juice. When hot, lift out the sardines carefully and keep them hot. Thicken the sauce with a little flour and the yolk of an egg. Place croutons of bread in a hot dish, lay on the sardines, grate over them Parmesan cheese, then pour over the hot sauce, and serve at once.

DUMPLINGS FOR SOUP.—One teaspoon of flour, two tablespoons chopped suet, half-teaspoon baking powder, half-teaspoon salt, a little pepper, a little chopped parsley; rub all this together and make into a firm paste with cold water; take little bits not quite so large as an egg and roll into quite round balls with well-floured hands; drop them in the soup when it is boiling; put on the lid and boil twenty minutes or half-an-hour; they will soon float and be ready.

POTTED MEAT.—Four pounds meat off the fore-leg, including the knuckle, one and half pounds of veal. Take all the marrow from the bones, and put all on to boil with six or seven breakfast cups of water, and boil all for three hours, then take out the meat and return the bones and gristle, skin, &c., to the pot and boil for four hours longer. Chop up the meat and put it aside. Strain the bones and measure the liquid. You should have four breakfast cups for that quantity of meat. Put all back in the pot, the liquid, the chopped meat, one and half teaspoons salt, half teaspoonful pepper, half-teaspoon allspice, and boil quarter of an hour. It may need a little water added to it. Put it in shapes.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

PLANTS grow faster between four and six a.m. than at any time during the day.

It is estimated that Europe is one billion dollars poorer every year by her system of armed peace.

At the present day sacred pigs roam inviolate about the Buddhist monasteries of Canton and elsewhere in China.

POUR dhawater and scapends about the roots of young fruit trees, currant and raspberry bushes. It facilitates their growth.

In some countries the leaves of trees are still used for books. In Ceylon the leaves of the talipot tree are used for that purpose.

The fastest train in England is the "Flying Scotchman," which runs from London to Edinburgh, 400 miles, in eight and a half hours.

WRITE it on your heart that every day is the Tuesday in the year. No man has learned anything rightly until he knows that every day is doomsday.

MORE butter per head is used in England than in any other country. Here we use thirteen pounds per head per annum; in Germany, eight pounds; Holland, six pounds; France, four pounds; Italy, one pound.

AN apparatus for testing the smelling capacities of individuals was recently exhibited in Paris. It is said to determine the weight of odorous vapour existing in a given quantity of air. The invention is called the olfactometer.

To make one's room sweet and spicy as pine woods, break off a few branches of Norway spruce and arrange them in a large jug of water. In a few days branches of tender green will feather out and will give forth a delicious odour and be a thing of beauty.

The word "shilling" is of German derivation, like "penny," which comes from the German pfennig. The word "crown" comes from the image placed on the coin. The name "franc" was given by King John, who first coined these pieces in 1360.

It will be news to many to know that the watch worn by the Great Dictator (Oliver Cromwell) is still in existence. It is a clock watch, and abram, oval-shaped, and of massive construction. It bears the date 1647, and the name "Oliver Cromwell" is inscribed upon it.

A POWERFUL lamp, which distinctly illuminates objects over half a mile distant, by means of a great reflector, is to be adopted in the French army. It is carried on a light wagon, behind the soldiers, and they will be in obscurity while the enemy and all objects in front will be made conspicuous.

THE Chinese settlers on the Island of Sumatra have a strange and ludicrous form of salutation. When they meet each other, say after an absence of a month or longer, they do not shake each other's hand; they smile broadly, and each grasps his own hand, shaking it vigorously for a few moments.

SOME census returns in Allahabad would tend to prove that the inhabitants do not mind calling a spade a spade. Among other admissions more or less undesirable were those of sixty "hereditary robbers and beggars by violence," thirty "howlers at funerals," 280 "flatterers for gain," and 6,000 odd "poets."

THE moustahe has had its day, everybody is shaving, and the girls are able, nowadays, to make up their minds as to the character of their men friends in half the time it used to take, for the mouth is ever so much more to be relied on as expressing character than the eyes, all eyes and wise people to the contrary notwithstanding. Draw a face, ever so crudely and wax the moustahe up; then another, and burn it down. Now compare them and believe for all future time what somebody says.

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**FADDY IRISH.**—You had better take a lawyer's advice on the subject.

**MILTON.**—Write to the Secretary, Young Men's Christian Association.

**COUNTRY BUMPKIN.**—The value of a franc (French) is 10d. in English money.

**H. C. B.**—It was in 1836 that Good Friday last fell on the 1st of April.

**BEVERICK.**—The man can be legally married in the name he has always borne.

**A STEP-DAUGHTER.**—Yes; a second wife has precisely the same legal rights as at first.

**PUBLICAN.**—Debts for beer, etc., supplied for consumption of the premises are recoverable.

**SPRING.**—The spring quarter begins at three o'clock A.M., on the 30th of March.

**UPON A.**—The steamer *Diploma* was wrecked off Gibraltar on March 17th of last year.

**TROUBLED MARY.**—A father cannot compel a girl of eighteen to leave her situation and go away with him.

**V. L. C.**—The total cost of the Victoria Law Courts, exclusive of the site, was about £90,000.

**BLACK PRINCE.**—There is no reason why a man should not appoint his son as one of his executors.

**GURTH.**—*Harold* was one of a group of three novels produced in rapid succession in mid-life by Bulwer.

**SUBSCRIBER.**—Moltke's own history of the Franco-German War is recognized as the most authoritative.

**QUINTELL.**—Magistrates are not elected, either for boroughs or counties; they are appointed by the Crown.

**BARBER.**—The only way to get a barber's berth on board ship is to apply to the office of the company you want to go with.

**A FOURTEEN YEARS' READER.**—No one can settle your private and personal affairs but yourselves; the legal questions can only be answered by a lawyer.

**A CITY CLERK.**—The word *advertise* occurs in Numbers, chapter xxiv, verse 14; also in Ruth, chapter iv, verse 4.

**BOB.**—The years the man served before his desertion count into his time, but not the years he was away from the army.

**W. R.**—If an apprentice absents himself from work, his employer is not bound to pay his wages during his absence.

**MAC.**—Should say no chance for you at the Cape. Slaves are exported in large quantities from this country *ready-made*.

**T. H.**—Concurrent sentences run together; if of equal terms they are consequently equivalent in duration to only one sentence.

**HARDY.**—Since you ask the question, we may answer that Britain is a first-rate Power in Europe, and has been so for close on 1,000 years.

**DIFFICULTIES.**—Money lent can be recovered by action in the county court, provided, of course, that adequate evidence of the debt can be given.

**TENDER-HEARTED.**—A sentence of penal servitude carries one of hard labour with it, unless the judge expressly directs to the contrary.

**BLUEBEARD.**—I. You will be kept a day or two, according to circumstances. 2. Right test is to count with one eye covered dots at twelve feet distance.

**M. T.**—When a person signs by his mark (being unable to write) the mark should be verified by the signature of a witness.

**ALL AT SEA.**—If the verdict is culpable homicide, which is taking away life without meaning to do so, the death sentence will not be passed.

**A. B. J.**—An apprentice's indentures may be cancelled by consent, or by the authority of the justices, on summons by either party concerned.

**CONSTANT READER.**—The population of Ireland at the last census was 4,766,163; and of London (Registrar General's district) 4,311,056.

**QUICKNO.**—We can find no record of the appearance of the cuckoo in England earlier than about the 6th of April, and this in the South of England.

**LEWELLYN.**—I. No. 2. Monmouthshire was formerly a Welsh, and is now an English county; but it is still for certain purposes regarded as Welsh.

**MATTHE.**—The heir to the Duke of Westminster is Viscount Belgrave, his grandson, and son of Earl Grosvenor, who died in 1884.

**V. B.**—On distraint, beds and bedding, etc., to the value of £5 must be left. Property belonging to a son (if not a bond-fide lodger) is distrainable.

**T. H. O.**—The Tichborne claimant was sentenced on 28th February, 1874, to fourteen years' penal servitude. He was released 30th October, 1884.

**A YOUNG COUPLE.**—If you took the place at so much a year, that is a yearly tenancy, and you are entitled to six months' notice, ending with date of entry.

**SCIENTIFIC.**—No clear and rigid definition of electricity can be given, so mysterious is the existence of that force. The true nature of the force is as yet unknown.

**JOCK.**—All we can tell you about the Cape Mounted Police is that the force is exclusively recruited in the colony. None are engaged for it in this country.

**A BROWNER.**—In violins, name is the first thing, age follows, because to be made by a famous maker a fiddle must be old; then tone is the last great consideration.

**A GLADSTONE.**—Mr. Gladstone is of Scotch parentage on both sides. His father was Mr., afterwards Sir John, Gladstone, of Fasque; his mother was the daughter of Mr. Andrew Robertson, of Stornoway.

**OVER THE SEA.**—The climate is no doubt an important element in fruit-raising, but soil and situation are equally important. The industry cannot be learnt from books.

**IN NEED OF ADVICE.**—You may try letter to Under Secretary for War, War Office, Pall Mall, London, stating pressing need of aid, but we doubt nothing will come of it.

**MYSEK.**—The Samoan or Navigation Islands are between Australia and South America, on a line drawn south of Callao, but about twice as far from America as from Australia.

**UNHAPPINESS.**—You might write to Mr. W. T. Lyall, British Consul, Santos, Brazil, who may be able to say what boat your son shipped in. That is the only course open to you.

**HAPPY GENTY.**—Two persons living in different towns wishing to be married by banns must have the banns published in both places. The banns hold good for three months.

## AN OLD MAN'S DREAM.

Oh, for one hour of youthful joy!  
Give back my twentieth spring!  
I'd rather laugh a bright-haired boy  
Than reign a grey-haired king!

—My listening angel heard the prayer  
And calmly smiling said,  
"If I but touch thy silvered hair,  
Thy hearty wish had sped."

"But is there nothing in thy track  
To bid thee fondly stay,  
While the swift seasons hurry back  
To find the wished-for day?"

—Ah, truest soul of womankind!  
Without thee, what were life?  
One bliss I cannot leave behind—  
I'll take—my precious—wife!

—The angel took a sapphire pen  
And wrote in rainbow dew:  
"The man would be a boy again,  
And be a husband, too!"

—And is there nothing yet unsaid  
Before the change appears?  
Remember, all their gifts have fled  
With those dissolving years!

Why, yes; for memory would recall  
My fond paternal joys;  
I could not bear to leave them all:  
I'll take—my—girl—and—boys!

The smiling angel dropped his pen;  
"Why, this will never do;  
The man would be a boy again,  
And be a father, too!"

And so I laughed—my laughter woke  
The household with its noise—  
And wrote my dream, when morning broke,  
To please the grey-haired boys.

O. W. H.

**DUNCAW.**—The French surrender at Metz included three marshals, 66 generals, 6,000 officers, 173,000 men, including imperial guard, 400 pieces of artillery, 100 mitrailleurs, and 55 eagles or standards.

**A. F. B.**—At the price you have paid the instrument ought to be a good one, and the firm you have purchased from have hitherto been regarded as leading in the trade.

**SALLY-IN-OUR-ALLEY.**—The Scottish Rifles now stationed at Jubbalpore, Bengal, are not apparently to be moved this year at any rate. They are not included in the recently-published "proposed infantry moves."

**A YOUNG WIFE.**—To remove grease spots from carpets, put a little soap into a gallon of warm water, and add half-an-ounce of borax; wash the spots well with a clean cloth, and the grease will soon disappear.

**IN DESPAIR.**—No country. Everywhere all the world over, the report is "no clerks need apply." Strike out in a new direction at home. Consider what you could do, then proceed to do it. That is the way to obtain success.

**JACQUES.**—The *Alabama* was not "sent out" as a privateer. She escaped from the Mersey on 23rd July, 1863, a day before the British Government telegraphed to detain her, and took her arms and ammunition on board at sea.

**SPIDER.**—No one can interdict you from walking on the public highway. There all persons are equal, and you need not give place upon it to the Queen herself if you should chance to meet her, except out of pure courtesy.

**GODFREY.**—Lent, the springtide fast of forty days ending with Easter, owes its English name to the Anglo-Saxon *lencen*, meaning "spring." In mediaeval times lencen became softened into leasen, and then lent.

**MADON.**—It is not necessary to go through any form. The moment it becomes apparent that your luggage consists of used household goods or plundering it is immediately passed. Let the officer see you are anxious he should see all you have.

**FIRST COUSINS.**—Where temperaments are alike, and there is a strong family resemblance, marriage is injudicious. But if there is a wide difference in these respects, no harm may come of it, and the union may be very happy.

**WESTWARD HO!**—You mean to follow your present line in Canada? Do not think of it. There is no opening for you in the colony, and you would just waste your spare cash in knocking about. The only real opening in Canada is for agricultural labourers, and not too much of that even.

**M. G.**—The quotation is from Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing," Act 2, scene 2:—

"Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,  
Men were deceivers ever;  
One foot in sea, and one on shore,  
To one thing constant never."

**OUTSIDER.**—Freemasons are not authorized under any Act to sell liquors in their lodges either by day or night, nor can they obtain special license to do so. Their members can drink as much as they please within their rooms, but cannot sell to outsiders. A Mason's lodge is, in the eyes of the law, a club, and subject to club rules.

**MOTHER-IN-LAW.**—Where there is a constant supply of fresh air and a moderate fire, the presence of a few plants can do little if any harm. It is the close air of sleeping-rooms that does the mischief. During the day the frequent opening and closing of doors admits outside air, but at night this is lacking.

**SCHOOL-GIRL.**—A house-warming is a feast or merry-making at the time a family enters a new house. It differs but slightly from ordinary receptions or parties; the only difference, in fact, being that there is more freedom and more hearty enjoyment than on the other occasions. All invited to a house-warming may regard themselves as on the permanent list of visitors.

**LOCUTION.**—Your best course would be to take lessons of some really first-class teacher. In the absence of the facilities for this, practice reading, anything, everything you come across. Munditate with the utmost care and precision; train your vocal organs to accuracy. Do not use a loud tone, but try for one of depth and power. Practice speaking in an ordinary tone to persons at some distance.

**J. C.**—At the battle of Ulundi Lord Chalmersford commanded the British forces. Cetewayo was totally defeated, and fled. Sir Garnet Wolseley, who had been appointed commander-in-chief, was then on his way up-country to take command. The battle was fought on 4th July, 1879. Sir Garnet received the honors of 18th, and Lord Chalmersford resigned on 15th. The engagement at Ulundi ended the war, but fighting was renewed in subsequent years, and continued in a desultory fashion over an extended period, during which Cetewayo, restored to his territory, was defeated by a rival chief, and died of heart disease.

**F. G.**—Breaking on the wheel was a mode of capital punishment, said to have been first employed in Germany; according to some writers on the murders of Leopold, Duke of Austria, in the fourteenth century. According to the German method of this execution, the criminal was laid on a cart-wheel with his arms and legs extended, and his limbs in that posture fractured with an iron bar. But in France, where it was restricted to cases of assassination, or other murders of an atrocious description, highway robbery, parricide, and other great crimes, the criminal was laid on a frame of wood in the form of a St. Andrew's cross, with grooves cut transversely in it above and below the knees and elbows; and the executioner struck eight blows with an iron bar, so as to break the limbs in those places, sometimes finishing the criminal by two or three blows on the chest or stomach; thence called *coup de grace*. He was then unbound and laid on a small carriage-wheel, with his face upward and his arms and legs doubled under him; there to expire, if still alive. Sometimes the executioner was directed to strangle the criminal, either before the first, or after one, two, or three blows. This punishment was abolished in France at the Revolution; but it was still resorted to in Germany as the punishment for parricide as late as 1827, near Göttingen. The assassin of the Bishop of Brmsland in Prussia, in 1841, was sentenced to the wheel.

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